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Narratives of Gypsy Identity and the Crossing of Boundaries

By

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Thesis for the degree Doctor of Philosophy

Department of Sociology, The Open University

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Abstract

Narratives of Gypsy Identity and the Crossing of Boundaries

By

Martin Myers

**Thesis submitted for the degree Doctor of Philosophy
The Department of Sociology, Faculty of Social Sciences
The Open University**

Gypsies have lived in the UK since the fifteenth century following a long diasporic movement originating in the north of India. Despite their long-standing presence they remain a marginalised group, often regarded in negative or stereotyped ways by their neighbours. This research considers the relationships of Gypsy families and their neighbours on the south coast of England. Using semi-structured interviews with members of 32 families the research explores the shaping of Gypsy identity. The interviews produced a unique picture of the lives of Gypsy families on the south coast and highlighted the ways in which family and individual identities were constructed both through their relationships with non-Gypsy neighbours and through the maintenance of boundaries between them. The research considers the associations between Gypsy identity and Gypsy community and identifies how these both shape and are shaped by relations with non-Gypsies. In this respect it pays particular attention to the role of citizenship in Britain since the Second World War and examines how citizenship demarcates a boundary with Gypsy non-citizens. The thesis suggests that Gypsy families on the south coast manage inherent physical closeness *and* distance in relations with their neighbours as well as less tangible, non-physical cultural markers. This bears the hallmarks of Simmel's (1971) *stranger*, but is often adapted around a self-imposed invisibility. Gypsy community is described as having a literal quality distinct from the citizenship routes of non-Gypsies in which community is based upon imagined commonalities. In doing so a 'Gypsy' identity emerges that can both maintain an historic understanding of Gypsy identity and adapt to the pressures of managing at times difficult relationships with non-Gypsy neighbours.

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Chapter 1 Introduction

1.1 Gypsies and their neighbours

This thesis looks at the lives of Gypsies in the UK and in particular at the relationships that exist between Gypsies living on the south coast of England and their neighbours. Perceptions of Gypsies almost unfailingly adopt a pattern of stereotypes that regard Gypsies as an alien 'other'. They are a group of people who are identified as being different to other racial and ethnic groups in the UK including indigenous white British groups and other white and non-white immigrant communities. The understanding of such a difference and the stereotypes used to describe the difference are generally portrayed in very negative terms.

Whilst conducting the research for this project and subsequently whilst writing up its findings there has been an increasing interest shown in the lives of Gypsies in the media. Channel 4 Television promoted a documentary series that ostensibly considers the lifestyles of Gypsies through the prism of wedding preparations in *My Big Fat Gypsy Wedding* (Channel 4, 2011). One of the stars of that series, Paddy Doherty, went on to participate and finally win Channel 5's *Celebrity Big Brother* (Channel 5, 2011). There has been significant media coverage of stories about Gypsy families enslaving vulnerable homeless people (see *The Independent* 13 September 2011), and the threatened and eventual eviction of more than 50 families from the Dale Farm site near Basildon became a long running public saga. More troubling is the lack of media attention for the racist motivations that seem to inform acts of violence such as the murder of an Irish Traveller, Johnny Delaney, in Ellesmere Port in 2003 (see Clark & Greenfields, 2006). Trevor Phillips, then Chair of the Commission for Racial Equality, noted 'it is extremely hard to see how this particular killing was not motivated in some way by racial prejudice' (GRTL, 2007). Similar racist overtones were reported in June 2009 in Belfast, when the homes of 20 Roma families came under sustained attack from local residents with the result that police were forced to evacuate over 100 Roma to safe temporary accommodation. A crowd was reported to have gathered outside their homes shouting racist slogans, smashing windows and kicking in doors (BBC News, 17 June 2009; The Observer, 21 June 2009). In relation to the attacks in Northern Ireland, Nicola Duckworth, Europe and Central Asia Programme Director at *Amnesty International*, suggested these highlighted the issue of racism towards Gypsies throughout Europe. She noted that, "Racist attacks are unacceptable and illegal. The Roma have every right to reside in Belfast and

be treated with respect and dignity as any other citizen of the city," (Amnesty International, 2009).

Ostensibly television programmes such as *My Big Fat Gypsy Wedding* portray both an interested and sympathetic viewpoint of the lives of Gypsies; but, they do so from a standpoint in which the difference between Gypsies and non-Gypsies is identified as the starting point for the viewer's interest. For the neighbours and potential neighbours of Gypsies that difference is confirmed as being extreme and potentially difficult to manage in their lives.

Whilst the nature of Gypsy identity finds itself a matter of public debate in Britain in the context of extreme and often inflammatory situations, in some respects these are less acute than relations between Gypsies and non-Gypsies elsewhere in Europe. Both Presidents Sarkozy and Berlusconi have happily associated themselves with political campaigns to criminalise and drive Gypsy families out of their respective countries. *Amnesty International* have detailed similar examples of racism towards the Roma in other parts of Europe, including the Czech Republic, Hungary, Italy, Romania, Serbia and Slovakia (see Amnesty International, 2011).

That Gypsies should be regarded with great hostility in the UK and throughout Europe is not surprising; not least because it is nothing new. Since their migration to Britain in the fifteenth century Gypsies have encountered hostility and suspicion. In some respects the treatment of Gypsies throughout other European countries has been significantly worse during that timeframe. Fraser (1992) and Hancock (1987) detail the impact of Gypsies arriving across Europe and the increasingly acrimonious relations that evolve. Whilst detailed evidence of hostility towards Gypsies exists, the interpretation of that evidence is often tenuous given the passage of time and a lack of historical context. Fraser (1992:85) for example discusses similarities with anti-Semitism based on fifteenth century accounts of the 'race' of Gypsies failing to succour the Holy Family; whilst it is a convincing account it is also a speculative one. What remains clear however, is a near universal European apprehension towards Gypsies.

1.1.1 Nomenclature

Throughout this thesis I use the term Gypsy or Gypsies to describe my respondents in a generic sense and refer to specific, self-ascribed identities, (such as English Gypsy or Traveller), when referring to individual respondents. A fuller account of nomenclature and the historic origins of different Gypsy communities follows in the literature review (see 3.3). In a contentious field the use of the term Gypsy is problematic for a

number of reasons. The main arguments against describing people as Gypsies are that it is an inaccurate or abusive term (Randall, 2008) and that it fails to acknowledge the true ethnic origins of Gypsies (Hancock, 2002; 2010a). However, it is also a term that is in general usage both amongst Gypsies as a means of self-ascription and more widely as an understandable and non-abusive term (Liégeois and Gheorghe, 1994; Bhopal and Myers, 2008).

Clark (2006) makes the point that, it matters a great deal whether a particular name is being applied to Gypsies or whether it is self-ascribed. The majority of respondents in this research described themselves as Gypsies and others described themselves as Travellers. Some respondents also used conglomerations of Gypsy and other terms such as Traveller fairly frequently, or, Romany less frequently. However, the same respondents also described how 'Gypsy' was frequently used as a term of abuse; for example being called 'dirty Gypsies' or 'thieving gyppos'.

Whilst Gypsy/Gypsies is used throughout the thesis in its non-abusive context, it is a term that does retain some ambiguity. Respondents often identified both the circumstances in which they were linked to other people who were known as Gypsies and to whom they felt connected; and also, on occasion being linked with groups of people they felt distinct from, but who were widely understood to fall within the umbrella term of Gypsy/Gypsies. The thesis examines the difficulties that result from such ambiguity and considers the role it plays within Gypsy identity.

1.1.2 The Thesis

In large part this thesis considers how Gypsies manage their relations with their neighbours. The thesis considers how ostracisation and demonisation affects Gypsy communities in a general sense and looks at understanding how this impacts on individual lives. In doing so it considers how Gypsies manage the hostility they face and how they reconcile such hostility within narrative accounts of their identity. Narrative is used in the sense described by Paul Ricoeur (1980, 1984) in which the conclusion is understood by the sets of circumstance that lead to a particular point in time. So the accounts given by families explore why and how they have reached a particular circumstance in their lives, (in the general sense of this thesis why they are living the sort of lives they are living today on the south coast of England). In this respect the impact of neighbour relations is important because despite relating narratives in which historic and global

events are given an important place within respondents' narratives, it was also apparent that often more recent and more local day-to-day events determined both the circumstances of respondents' lives and their understandings of their identities. The potential for more locally inspired narrative accounts within Gypsy lives reflects the fragmentation that has featured in historic diasporic movements and in the response to the hostility they have encountered from society in general.

Whilst conducting the research for this thesis I was also working on an academic research project on behalf of a county council looking at education services for Gypsy pupils (Bhopal *et al*, 2008). In addition to producing a report and delivering workshops to practitioners, the research findings were presented at a conference at the University of Southampton. It was a well-attended event that included many academics, civil servants and policy makers, practitioners and some of the parents who had taken part in the research. Towards the end of the day the final question and answer session turned into a more general discussion and one of the points raised was a discussion about Gypsies not wishing to hide their identity; that they, like many people, were proud of who they were. One of the fathers who had been interviewed for the project responded to this by saying that, yes of course he was very proud of his Gypsy background, but that,

I don't go putting 'Gypsy Builders' on the side of my van do I? How much work would I get then?

It was an interesting moment because it brought into focus the collision between, on the one hand his need to be discrete about his identity, including an acknowledgement of behaviour that might almost be considered as 'passing' as a non-Gypsy, and on the other hand, issues around pride about his cultural heritage. Included within a sense of such pride was a particular relationship between 'work' and Gypsy identity. Describing his identity he stressed the importance of his work ethic in defining his role as the family provider. It could be argued that he was forced to align two alien accounts of his life. On the one hand he was assigned the role of a Gypsy man, defined within globally and historically constructed understandings, to be the provider for his family. On the other hand, the local, present day reality of acquiring work as a builder, was a situation in which his Gypsy background inevitably precluded him from many work opportunities. It could also reasonably be argued from the comment quoted above that in the struggle to reconcile these two oppositional accounts, it was the realities of the local and his relationships with neighbours in the present day, that carried the most currency.

The importance, for Gypsy men in particular, of being able to generate an income and support their families financially, mirrors much research (Okely, 1983; Levinson and Sparkes, 2004). However, the working aspects of his life were also those in which he had to negotiate most closely with non-Gypsies. Work was inevitably linked to the economies of non-Gypsies and to an engagement with their world. In order to generate an income he needed to cross and re-cross boundary lines that existed between himself and his neighbours. It was clear that he recognised and constructed a boundary between his world and the non-Gypsy world, and also, that he was adept at moving between the two. Perhaps more importantly however, he, and his family, necessarily inhabited both worlds at the same time. They watched the same TV programmes as their non-Gypsy neighbours and they shopped at the same branch of *Tesco* on a Friday afternoon. This thesis will argue that Gypsy identity is constructed within the distinct and different worlds of Gypsies and non-Gypsies, but also, within a shared world. That shared world in some respects is the world of neighbours; it is a world in which relationships necessarily exist between different groups of people.

Where those worlds intersect most sharply, around work or education for example, there are moments in which many Gypsies have to manage their identity differently. Sometimes this happens in a more ambiguous manner by perhaps hiding aspects of their identity; sometimes in a more forthright manner challenging non-Gypsies' perceptions and stereotypes; and, sometimes by simply absenting themselves quickly from a difficult situation. How these intersections are managed and the affect they have upon how Gypsy families understand their identity form the basis of this thesis.

One family who were interviewed in the research recalled a birthday party they had arranged for their seven year old daughter. She was attending the local primary school and as is customary for children of that age she invited the whole of her class to an afternoon of jumping around on bouncy castles, playing games and eating lots of cake. None of her classmates came to her party. In such circumstances the notion of identity seems to be a very raw subject; the short term hurt inevitably fuelling historic and future understandings of what it is like to be a Gypsy amongst non-Gypsies. In some respects it is easy to intellectualise the processes that led to parents not letting their child play with a Gypsy child, by thinking in terms of the creation of boundaries, of 'otherness' or around the political activity of 'citizenship'. That is by building arguments that look at the non-Gypsy world's measures to construct non-Gypsy society. Partially mirroring the behaviours of non-Gypsies who try not to engage with Gypsy society, (i.e. by not letting their child attend a children's party or not employing a Gypsy builder), the thesis examines Gypsy behaviours that work to keep non-Gypsy culture at arm's length. Noticeable examples of such behaviours are explored in the thesis particularly

around younger family members being withdrawn from schooling, or restrictions on Gypsy children visiting their non-Gypsy peers. Often these behaviours were described in terms of maintaining safety within children's lives. In other words non-Gypsy neighbours were identified as presenting a threat to Gypsies. Whilst this threat was sometimes articulated in more generalised commentaries, such as the erosion of Gypsy culture, it was also often readily attributed to very specific threats e.g. paedophilia associated with non-Gypsies.

This thesis builds on Gypsy perspectives of the way society works around them. In doing so it considers why and how in so many respects Gypsy identity, culture and lifestyles remain successful despite the many attempts to suppress or marginalize them.

1.2 Research Aims

Using in-depth interviews with Gypsy respondents living on the south coast in West Sussex and Hampshire the aim of this research is to examine the different ways in which Gypsy identity materialises within the UK and to reconcile the ambiguities and differences that are apparent within differing accounts of Gypsy identity. It takes as its starting point an assumption; that Gypsy lives are not and never have been divorced and separate from those of their non-Gypsy neighbours. In order to understand Gypsy identity the thesis will explore the distancing of Gypsies within society to analyse how they are *othered* within this and similar processes. It will also highlight the response of Gypsies to such processes by examining how Gypsies maintain a strong sense of 'community' and 'agency' in their relationships within wider society, particularly relationships with their 'neighbours'. Neighbour relationships are highlighted within the thesis as having importance because they constitute specific relationships to actual people rather than with a nebulous set of outsiders; they are relationships that highlight understandings of community membership; and, they provide an insight into the contexts in which Gypsy communities may be related to wider understandings of citizenship.

1.2.1 Distancing of Gypsies

There is well-established evidence that the daily lives of Gypsies are, unsurprisingly, determined by many of the same priorities as their non-Gypsy neighbours. Gypsies share concerns about ensuring their safety and security, and, fulfilling the basic human needs of being adequately fed, clothed and housed (Okely, 1983). There is sometimes the suspicion that this is not how non-Gypsies understand Gypsy lifestyles. Instead non-Gypsies often regard Gypsy lifestyle as being constructed within a set of very negative stereotypes such as their criminality, dirtiness or fecklessness (Mayall, 1995). Even in circumstances where there are regular, widely acknowledged contacts between Gypsies and non-Gypsies, such as the annual horse fair held in Appleby (Holloway, 2005), the same stereotypes persist. By constructing identity in terms of such stereotypes this tends to emphasise the marginal nature of Gypsy lifestyles (Bancroft, 1995, Ní Shuinéar, 1997). It is a reflection of the boundary making enterprises of dominant non-Gypsy society to position the sub-altern Gypsy population as an alien *other* whose social mores are different. This is evidenced by the siting of Gypsy sites by local authorities in marginal spaces, for example often on the edges of towns and at a distance from the general population. This distancing reflects the negative stereotypes of Gypsies as dirty or disruptive, and also as a group disengaged from norms of behaviour such as paying taxes or applying for planning permission; they are therefore pushed away from the areas occupied by non-Gypsies.

Alternatively, Gypsy lives are romanticised (Mayall 1988, 2004) which can also have a similarly distancing effect; Gypsies are presented as a group of people who are slightly 'out of time' and living in the pre-modern past. The thesis will examine the ambiguities that are therefore present within Gypsy lives, including the sense in which they are both close to the non-Gypsy world and distant from it simultaneously. Within popular imaginations Gypsies may live in spaces that are distanced by geography, they may be (mis)understood to live outdated lives distanced by time, and, be constructed as a group whose practices are beyond the pale, even repulsive to their neighbours. At the same time, Gypsies have for 600 years been an ever-present feature within urban and rural landscapes, not least because of their need to engage in economies with the dominant population. This relationship reflects in some part Simmel's (1971) notion of the *stranger*, an immigrant figure who lives both close to and amongst the population but remains a representative of an alien, *other* population. Simmel's understanding of the *stranger* as an immigrant figure or newcomer will never exactly map onto the experiences of Gypsies who first came to Britain in the fifteenth century. The consequence of so much time passing would suggest that the immigrant status of Gypsies is open to question; is it possible for example to remain an immigrant community despite having

lived in one place for so long? Despite this, the *stranger* is a useful starting point to consider the type of 'otherness' that is represented by boundary lines around Gypsies; and to ask the question, what kind of 'outsiders' are Gypsies?

1.2.2 The Otherness of Gypsies

In order to understand the nature of Gypsy 'otherness', it is important to understand how identity is shaped. Many accounts of identity formation highlight the importance of narrative in order to distinguish cultural identity; what Hall describes as 'a matter of "becoming" as well as of "being"' (Hall 2003:236). In Hall's account the *becoming* is the narrative element, the story of how groups of people's own lifetime experiences differ and how their identity changes accordingly; the *being* is the relationship attributed to one's roots. The thesis will examine this sense of *being* and question whether it can be understood in the context of a 'Gypsy nation'. It will consider whether Gypsies can be considered within an over-arching identity that encompasses the many different groups of people who call themselves or are labelled as Gypsies (and other related terms such as Roma or Traveller). Such an identity will also be considered within a transnational sense, one that considers Gypsies as a stateless though linked group of people living across continents. Accounts of the Gypsy diaspora from India are well documented (Hancock, 1987, 1998) and supported by linguistic (Matras, 2004) and anthropological/biological (Iovita and Schurr, 2004) evidence. However, in this research it seemed doubtful that the same detailed accounts of a Gypsy diaspora could be recognised within the narrative accounts of identity offered by respondents. Perhaps even more clearly, within popular imaginations and within the public discourses described above, knowledge of the Gypsy diaspora is limited or unknown. The consequence of such a failure to register is important in establishing what kind of 'otherness' is at stake. Simmel's *stranger* for example is predicated on a figure that comes from *somewhere else*; that is to say a stranger who comes from a place that may not be well known but is understood to materially exist, a foreign country for example. This thesis in part considers the consequences of a *stranger* who comes *from nowhere*; a stranger who may not have an apparent material point of origin. The ambiguities that might be associated with the 'outsider' figure become compounded within this reading. Meanwhile the narrative element of identity such as Hall's sense of *becoming*, is perhaps a more straightforward discourse to explore. In many ways Gypsy culture is, often by necessity, hugely adaptable. Being identified and treated as a persecuted minority there is a long history, (not just in the UK but internationally), of groups of Gypsies adapting to changing circumstances in order to survive and generate a

living. The thesis will examine these narrative accounts of identity that in many ways highlight the connections between Gypsy and non-Gypsy worlds. The impact of changing circumstances upon individuals and families and their responses to them will be analysed as a means of unravelling contemporary accounts of identity. In his work on narrative and temporality Ricoeur notes how narrative time,

is not the anonymous time of ordinary representation but the time of interaction. In this sense, narrative time is, from the outset, time of being-with-others. (Ricoeur 1980:188)

Ricoeur is signalling the importance of agency in the production of a narrative and the construction of an 'othered' identity. The thesis examines both how an engagement with society produces identity and also how the adaptability towards the wider world suggests something that is self-determined. By highlighting self-determination and agentic aspects of Gypsy lives, the thesis recognises potential problems with Hall's sense of *being* when applied to Gypsies, but at the same time acknowledges that something else must fill its place. It will examine how a notion of responsibility towards one's own identity might be one of the more enduring elements of Gypsy experience and in some respects this is crucial in the creation of a sense of 'community' that persists within Gypsy lives.

1.2.3 Gypsies, Community and Citizenship

The concept of 'community' is central to understanding Gypsy identity. On the one hand the engagement with 'community' is an important factor in promoting a continuous line of identity, something that perhaps replaces Hall's *being*. On the other hand, the maintenance of community is also about the construction of a boundary with wider society that speaks less about continuity and more about the on-going adaptations Gypsies make in respect of the world around them.

Two aspects have to be taken into account to understand the boundary line between Gypsies and non-Gypsies; that created around Gypsies by society and that created around Gypsies by themselves. As discussed, there is pressure on Gypsies to cross and re-cross borderlines in order to make a living, (or to secure an education or buy a loaf of bread); so such boundaries have to be managed in a highly fluid fashion. By examining these very fluid boundaries, the notion of 'community' that materialises within Gypsy society, its strengths and weaknesses, will be considered. Whilst community might represent a means of

understanding the ties that bind Gypsies together and might be considered as the structure that constitutes their social relations; there are also wider accounts of what constitutes community and structure beyond Gypsy lives. The thesis considers the political and social accounts of such structure, that have materialised within discourses about citizenship in Britain since the end of the Second World War. In particular it examines the means by which 'Gypsy community' may work within and against 'non-Gypsy citizenship'.

1.2.4 Community and Agency

The construction of community will be examined in part as a testing ground for the degree of agency that materialises within Gypsy lives. Whilst on the one hand it is patently an over-simplification to suggest that the lives of Gypsies are simply determined by the arbitrary turn of historical events that have dispersed groups of people across the world in a random, scatter-shot fashion. On the other hand when considering the adaptability and tenaciousness of different groups in the face of such a history it would be wrong to assume a position of the last Cartesian standing. Gypsy identity seems shaped by both the world at large and also by the response towards the world by Gypsy communities and individuals. Community might be defined in terms of cultural practices situated within a historical context; accordingly Gypsy identity could be understood as simply historical moments in which Gypsies adopt a certain figure or public face. This might be determined along the lines of Mauss's (1979) 'triple viewpoint' as a combination of biological, psychological and sociological, processes upon the body. Or, a Gypsy subject might be understood in Foucauldian (1984) terms of the existing moral code of the time; the subject's means of operating within that code and the subjects' understanding of how the life lived is validating itself. The British experience of Gypsies perhaps undermines such constructions of identity on two accounts. Firstly the historic record is an odd one because in many ways Gypsy lives have retained an extraordinary consistency. They remain subject to the same misrepresentations, the same hate campaigns and the same racisms that materialised and are documented 600 years ago. Throughout the transitions from the dying days of mediaeval feudalism, through the industrial revolution, to modernity and post-modernity, Gypsies are not shaped by historical moments but instead retain an aura of the identities cast upon them since their arrival in the UK. Secondly, and perhaps contradictorily, Gypsies and their communities remain hugely adaptable in order to survive economically (Sway, 1984; Levinson, 2007; 2008). Such adaptation is driven by the strong sense of community that persists in the face of unchanging hostility. Agency seems a key factor in this slightly ambiguous set of circumstances; reflecting Ricoeur's (1980, 1984) description of individuals taking

responsibility for the decisions they make when dealing with the world. The expenditure of agency for Ricoeur has a cost that is the final conclusion to a narrative; the moment at which all the strands of a story are pulled tightly together.

The thesis will examine how consistency and adaptability are linked to modern day identities of Gypsies. In doing so it will examine how the narratives of identity are shaped by wider society, Gypsy 'community' and cultural practice, and the degree to which such community values materialise as agency.

1.3 The Thesis

Following a review of the existing literature the thesis presents the major findings of the research in five chapters, which examine, space, work, education, citizenship and community.

1.3.1 Literature Review

There is a significant body of work that examines the lives of Gypsies and Chapter 3, the literature review, will both outline the extent of this literature and position this thesis within that literature. It argues that much of the work that has been produced by academics tends to be focussed on fairly narrow themes. The bulk of academic research has looked at particular policy issues e.g. Gypsies and healthcare or Gypsies and education. Such work is often funded from national government sources, (e.g. the education or health departments of different countries), through the European Union or associated institutional bodies, or, through charities. Often such work is descriptive reflecting its aims to explain and remedy perceived problems, (e.g. the poor achievement levels of Gypsy children attending school or the poor healthcare received by Gypsy communities). Such work is relatively well established and understood to sit within a framework that encompasses politicians, civil servants, practitioners and academics.

In addition to academic and policy work, there are smaller bodies of research that have examined two inter-related areas, firstly that of Gypsy identity and culture and secondly, almost as a specific sub-group of that work, Gypsy linguistics. In some respects the distinction between these two areas reflects the organisation of academic institutions rather than the subject matter at hand; many of those working in this field might

describe their area as 'Gypsy' or 'Romany Studies', and, when describing this in greater detail outline elements of their work that encompass language, sociology, geography, social policy, media and cultural studies. Much of this work is more internationally focussed than purely policy orientated work, (which tends to be both funded and directed towards national or local issues, though there is also EU funded work that looks at Europe more generally). The history of academics working in this field is also distinguished by factionalism, and the reasons for this and its consequences are discussed more fully in the literature review. It should be briefly noted at this stage that competing arguments explaining Gypsy identity often dispute the true nature of Gypsy ethnic origin. Such factionalism has seen work that has a clear political intent to position an internationally understood 'Gypsy or Romany nation' within international politics (e.g. Ian Hancock's body of work, see 2010a). This position has been countered by academics such as Judith Okely (2003) who suggest that despite ethnic origins that lie in India nearly 1000 years ago, the lives of Gypsies today have been socially constructed across long periods of time and through their involvement and inter-mixing with large numbers of non-Gypsy indigenous people. As stated earlier some linguists have used their work to engage within these wider debates, suggesting inaccuracies in both of these accounts.

Finally there has been a longstanding production of work that seeks to describe the lives of Gypsies from non-academic perspectives; these often appeal to romantic or slightly exploitative markets such as accounts of bare-knuckle fighting or starry-eyed tales of life on the open road (e.g. Gorman and Walsh, 2002; Smith, 2009; Fonseca, 1996).

The literature review seeks to situate the thesis in a slightly different context to that of other academic work. It is an ethnographic piece of work examining the lives of Gypsy families on the south coast of England from a sociological perspective. Whilst this may suggest a local account, this perspective would fail to do justice to those respondents who positioned themselves within a much wider picture of Gypsies both nationally and internationally. It would also fail to acknowledge the prevalence of much similar evidence about Gypsy lives both in the UK and the rest of the world. The literature review therefore acknowledges the importance of the history and geography of the Gypsy diaspora, whilst arguing against both the manipulation of that history to strengthen political stances, and, also against those non-Gypsy perceptions that have tended to consider Gypsies as having emerged from nowhere, as a stateless people without ethnic credibility. The thesis situates respondents in terms of their own accounts and in describing their lives provides a snapshot of a moment that acknowledges their narratives; where they have come from, where

they are now and where they are going. It situates these narratives within the wider body of academic and non-academic work that has sought to explain Gypsy identity.

The thesis focuses on relations between Gypsies and their neighbours in the UK. It seeks to break away from international accounts of the persecution of the Gypsy diaspora and from the more specific accounts of policy led work on Gypsies in the UK. Instead it theorises the relations between Gypsy and non-Gypsy lives, (from a Gypsy perspective), and theorises how Gypsies manage aspects of the world around them that highlight their difference. Whilst the notion of 'neighbours' has a distinct sociological resonance touching directly upon the relations between different people; 'neighbours' itself is not a concept that has been widely discussed within much of the sociological literature on identity. The thesis offers a discussion of understanding such relationships within this context, in particular through discussions of community and citizenship, but at the same time maintaining an understanding of the resonance of the concept of 'neighbours'.

The five findings chapters consider individual though inevitably inter-related subject areas. The first of these looks at space and distance, followed by chapters that consider work, education, citizenship and community.

1.3.2 Space and Distance

Chapter 4 explores the physical distances that exist between Gypsies and their neighbours, through the very specific examination of places and spaces that Gypsy families occupy on the south coast of England. In particular it considers the positioning of sites, (both local authority managed and privately owned), and argues that such sites create distance between Gypsies and non-Gypsies. In part this is dictated by the non-Gypsy population both in their use of planning processes that hinder Gypsies from developing land in proximity to non-Gypsy communities, and also, in the positioning of local authority sites in areas that are not only distant from other residents but also in poorly serviced areas that are generally unattractive to non-Gypsies. The chapter will also explore how some respondents, often as a result of their personal success and wealth, were able to distance themselves from non-Gypsies. Their relative success created opportunities in which they exercised greater choice about where they lived. In such circumstances, the locations chosen often mirrored the maintenance of distance from non-Gypsy neighbours, that seemed apparent in the locations of local authority sites. Furthermore these locations were often regarded by less successful

families, who did not have similar choices about where they could live, as the idealised locations they would choose given the resources to do so.

The chapter also considers families who are housed but still maintain a degree of distance between themselves and non-Gypsy neighbours.

Distance is described in terms of the physical materialisation of distance between spaces, (for example the physical distance between a local authority site and bus links, shops and non-Gypsy housing), but more importantly it is considered in terms of its symbolic value. The physical materialisation of distance is discussed as a means of understanding the types of relationships that exist between Gypsies and non-Gypsies. The relationships described outline the separateness of Gypsies from non-Gypsies in different aspects of their lives.

Spatial understandings and their impact upon identity highlight different understandings of identity. The thesis will argue that, for Gypsies, their narrative accounts of their relationship to particular spaces is important in fixing positive accounts of their lifestyles within communally understood accounts of who Gypsies are. Their accounts of the space they occupy differs from the accounts of non-Gypsies, in part because it falls within what hooks (1991) describes as the 'politics of location', which represents 'the formation of counter-hegemonic cultural practice to identify the spaces where we begin the process of revision' (hooks, 1991:145).

1.3.3 Work and Income

Chapter 5 examines work and income, and alongside the following chapter which considers education, to some extent challenges the earlier premise that Gypsies are distanced from non-Gypsies. These chapters examine areas of daily life in which there is a considerable confluence between Gypsies and non-Gypsies. By examining the work relationships between Gypsies and their neighbours the chapter highlights many ambiguities in the lives of Gypsies; particularly those that emerge from discussions of distance in the previous chapters. This chapter uses Simmel's discussion of the *stranger*, with its emphasis on an ambiguous relationship that derives from the contemporaneous proximity and distance of migratory groups. Drawing upon the earlier discussion of the Gypsy diaspora, it will argue that the otherness of Gypsies relates

to their proximity in non-spatialised aspects of their lives to non-Gypsies, for example their work patterns and engagement with non-Gypsy economies in order to generate income. It also considers how the proximity of some aspects of Gypsy lives might be understood more symbolically; for example within local politics and media reporting, in which there is a tendency to exaggerate the impact of Gypsies upon their neighbours, (in terms of crime or dirt/uncleanliness for example).

The chapter explores the notion that Gypsies are different from non-Gypsies by discussing the literature that considers the outsider status of Gypsies. In part this chapter is therefore very important in terms of situating the thesis in relation to other academic writing. It acknowledges that difference and outsider qualities are undoubtedly apparent in the lives of Gypsies, and, that these can and should be understood in terms of theoretical accounts such as that of Simmel's *stranger*. However, the chapter outlines how accounts of difference fail to grasp the closeness that is present between Gypsies and non-Gypsies. This is considered in terms of the working lives of Gypsies; in particular their inevitable need to engage economically with non-Gypsy communities and their associated economies. The chapter also considers the meanings of diaspora for groups whose last diasporic movement is a distant memory. It questions the degree to which migratory histories can be considered an element of the difference for groups of people who no longer travel and who have no familial connection outside of the UK. The chapter further examines some of the ambiguities present in Gypsy lives by highlighting the importance of travelling for many families. Travelling being understood in many cases, not as an on-going aspect of daily, economic life, but rather as a symbolic register, in which the importance of ethnic distinctiveness is maintained and understood.

1.3.4 Schools and Education

Whilst an engagement with non-Gypsy economies in order to secure work was an inevitable encounter that could not be avoided if families were to generate income, relations with schools were more flexible and perhaps offered families' greater choices in how they accessed schooling. There are well-documented accounts of Gypsy children either not attending school (Plowden, 1967; O'Hanlon & Holmes, 2004) at all, or, dropping out at an early age, often around the onset of adolescence (Myers et al, 2010). Similar patterns were observed amongst the families interviewed in this research, including more nuanced accounts of practical adaptations to education. Parents for example recognised the value of adopting non-Gypsy terminologies; when referring to the withdrawal of a child from school it made sense, in an official

environment, to refer to their right to 'electively home educate' rather than claim there was nothing further to be learnt at school.

Chapter 5 concludes by arguing that there is a particular set of ambivalent circumstances to the lives of many Gypsies that makes the difference/outsiderness of their lives very distinct from other groups. Such ambivalent circumstances define many of the relations between Gypsies and non-Gypsies, and, generate a degree of confusion that can be seen to affect wider political measures designed to control aspects of their lives. Whilst the nearness/distance binary seems to underline a theoretical position that lends itself to Simmel's *stranger*, this chapter argues that something slightly different is apparent. The distancing techniques used by Gypsy families historically is an element of their own management of relations with non-Gypsies. In many ways, protecting aspects of Gypsy culture and difference is a useful strategy, even if it is a self-exclusionary strategy.

1.3.5 Citizenship

Chapter 7 (citizenship) and Chapter 8 (community) consider relations between Gypsies and their neighbours, and, in doing so attempt to reconcile some of the ambiguities that have been highlighted in discussions of distance/proximity, strangeness/familiarity and sedentarism/travelling. As previously mentioned there is little academic work that directly addresses the issue of 'neighbours' and their relations; though within sociological work there is of course much interest in social relationships. One useful means of understanding the lives of Gypsies living on the south coast is the concept of citizenship; in particular as it materialised in the policies of the Atlee government following the Second World War and as outlined in the work of Marshall (1950). Whilst it is arguable that the type of citizenship envisaged by Marshall and Beveridge was superseded by the policies of Margaret Thatcher and Tony Blair this perhaps overstates the impact of their governments. The foundations of citizenship established in post-war Britain, (compulsory education, the NHS, the welfare State), remain in place and also remain significant in the lives of Gypsies.

Citizenship is a useful concept to consider neighbour relations because it emphasises both the rights and the obligations of citizens in their everyday dealings with each other and their relationship to the state. Chapter 7 considers how respondents' lives did not sit comfortably either within understandings of what citizenship might entail from their own perspective, or from the perspective of non-Gypsy neighbours. Citizenship as

experienced by Gypsies was an exclusionary practice designed to protect the lives of the citizens; in some respects this chapter asks the questions set by Isin,

For citizens to establish themselves as virtuous, there ought to have been those who “lacked” their virtues. Against whom did citizens define themselves? How were strangers and outsiders constituted in relation to citizens? (2002:3)

1.3.6 Community

In Chapter 8 relationships between Gypsies and their neighbours are further analysed by an examination of what is meant by community. In particular how the imagined communities of Anderson (1991) which bind together disparate groups of people within a single boundary might differ from the understandings of community shared by Gypsies. Once again this chapter seeks to delineate lines of difference between Gypsies and their neighbours that historically remain apparent.

The chapter suggests that non-Gypsies find Gypsies useful because they provide a fixed point against which they can define themselves; in doing so, perhaps answering Isin's (2002) question: Gypsies as non-citizens provide a fixed point against which citizens can understand themselves to be virtuous. However, in order to maintain this fixed point Gypsies have to be imagined, by non-Gypsies, in terms that assert their need for difference. This happens to some degree by stereotyping Gypsy behaviour and also by simply inventing a mythology of the identity of the Gypsy. Often this works by simplifying the understandings of Gypsies into stereotypes that fuel popular imaginations. The chapter draws upon a range of possible interpretations of Gypsies as non-citizens or iconic media representations of the 'bad neighbour'. It argues that such accounts diminish the complexities of Gypsy lives.

1.4 Research Questions

This thesis will address the following questions:

1.4.1 *How is Gypsy identity constructed on the south coast of England?*

The main focus of this thesis is to address the question of *how Gypsy identity is constructed on the south coast of England?* In doing so it is engaging with an argument that has been the focus of academic debate within what is generally referred to as 'Gypsy' or 'Romany Studies' since the 1960's. At the heart of that argument is a highly contested debate over whether Gypsy identity should be understood as being part of an international Romany nation, or whether it should be understood as being socially constructed at a national or local level. Throughout the 1970's and 1980's these two positions seemed to constitute diametric opposites, the intervening years have seen a degree of reconciliation of these arguments, though a fundamental dichotomy between the two factional positions remains an on-going fault line within the subject area.

In many ways the opposition of internationalism to local and changing ideas of identity mirrors the *being* and *becoming* strands of Hall's description of identity. In exploring the question of how Gypsy identity is constructed, the thesis will consider whether understandings of Hall's *being* should be reconfigured. When discussing the origins of Gypsy groups and their sense of belonging, a problem with the concept of a mother nation is evident. Internationalists have tried, with little success, to summon up a nation with Indian roots and/or an imaginary notion of '*Romanestan*'. In my discussions with respondents, the sense of an international nation of Gypsies with Indian roots was often only conceived of in tenuous or nearly irrelevant terms. Although historical links to India were understood and talked about, they rarely framed a strong sense of what it meant to be a Gypsy. And yet, almost overwhelmingly all respondents spoke of a strong sense of their Gypsy identity in terms that were historically established and robust. It is this strong sense of *being* that will be examined and reconciled within the slightly clearer patterns of routes, that is the narratives of *becoming*.

In order to explore the question of Gypsy identity the thesis will pose the following sub-questions designed to situate this research within, and in opposition to, wider academic fields. Firstly it will ask; *is there a different way of being?* That is to say can *being* be configured differently to Hall's sense of roots in a general

sense, and, outside of the international and politically recognised world of Gypsy politics more specifically? So, in the case of Gypsies it is clearly the case that not only are they a stateless group of people without a territory, but additionally they are distanced from the notion of a home territory in consequence of their historical movements and through a global scattering and dispersal of related groups of people; in such circumstances what holds these disparate groups together within a single sense of being? Secondly it will ask; *why is 'Gypsy and Romany studies' wedded so deeply to debate that is constrained by the linguistic/social-construction dichotomy and what impact has that academic debate had on Gypsy identity?*

1.4.2 What is the relationship between Gypsy identity and Gypsy community?

The thesis will consider the ways in which Gypsy identity shapes its notion of community, how community materialises and, in turn, the affect community has upon identity. The thesis will examine the relationship between Gypsy identity and Gypsy community. The real importance of examining this question is to make a tangible cross-reference to the *being/becoming* debate. That is to establish in a material sense of how lives are actually lived, and accepting that there is a distinctive Gypsy community, (one that is different from the non-Gypsy world), understand the role 'community' plays in maintaining the boundaries that exist between Gypsy and non-Gypsy worlds. In order to fully explore the nature of Gypsy 'community' the thesis poses the sub-questions; *how are boundaries formed between Gypsy and non-Gypsy society? How are these boundaries crossed, (including cultural penetration as opposed to individual penetration)? How and why are boundaries maintained?*

1.4.3 Does a narrative account of Gypsy identity reconcile competing and ambiguous understandings of who Gypsies are?

The research focuses on an understanding of narrative accounts; including grand narratives, (the story of the Gypsy diaspora), and also smaller narratives that take shape within individual lives. The thesis will analyse how individual life stories shape and affect the wider narratives of Gypsy communities. It will consider that if 'a conclusion must be acceptable' (Ricoeur 1980:174), and in doing so it must tie together the different and competing elements of a narrative, then within Gypsy narratives the conclusion has much work to do. Narrative accounts of Gypsies include the differing accounts offered by Gypsies themselves, the often very

different accounts of non-Gypsies and also those of academics and other commentators; the thesis argues that Gypsy identity is shaped with and by all these discordant voices. The final research question reconciles the different understandings of Gypsy identity voiced by respondents that emerge from relations with neighbours, as well as those that appear within academic literature.

Chapter 2 The Research Process

2.1 Introduction

This chapter discusses the methodological and ethical approaches utilised in this study. The research aim is to examine Gypsy families' understandings of their relationships with their neighbours. The research questions are:

- *How is Gypsy identity constructed on the south coast of England? In the UK?*
- *What is the relationship between Gypsy identity and Gypsy community?*
- *Does a narrative account of Gypsy identity reconcile competing and ambiguous understandings of who Gypsies are?*

The research adopts a qualitative, ethnographic approach using in-depth interviews with family members, (parents, children and extended family). This chapter will consider the rationale and ethics behind this approach and discuss the research design, data collection process and data analysis. This chapter will conclude with some personal reflections on the research process.

2.2 Rationale

The research is underpinned by an interest in examining the under explored topic of how Gypsy families understand their relationships with their non-Gypsy neighbours and how these relationships contribute to an understanding of Gypsy identity. The rationale for this research was to take an approach that

- is qualitative rather than quantitative;
- actively represents and reports the views of Gypsies rather than their non-Gypsy neighbours;
- uses the 'family' as the base unit of what constitutes a respondent; and,

- grounds theoretical conclusions within the raw data generated by the research.

This section examines the background and rationale to this approach in detail.

2.2.1 *Qualitative research*

Mason (1996) describes 'qualitative research' as an essentially ephemeral term that covers the work of many different disciplines, traditions and schools of thought; it might for example include the work of interpretivist sociologists, phenomenologists, ethnomethodologists, postmodernists, anthropologists, psychologists, geographers, educationalists, cultural theorists and feminists to name but a few. She suggests this multiplicity of approach reflects how,

different traditions, schools and disciplines operate with distinctive views about what makes the social world go around, what is important in the social world, and what the social world looks like and so on. (Mason 1996:3)

Mason deflects the potential criticism of alternative quantitative approaches by suggesting qualitative work needs to be conducted in a rigorous and systematic fashion. Differentiating and in some respects privileging qualitative over quantitative research, Mason highlights the value of interpreting data in a holistic fashion that pays attention to the complexities and different layers of social context. She describes a sensitised and adaptable approach in which researchers demonstrate reflexivity and understanding of their own biases within the research topic. The ethical and political implications of such biases should be reflected within their research. Mason also argues that qualitative research should be, 'generalizable in some way' and 'have a wider resonance', rather than just being an individual or specific account. This slightly undermines her earlier arguments in which the individuality and sensitivity of the researcher influences an understanding of the particular complexities of any situation.

Denzin suggests a more forthright approach, shifting the emphasis to the production of work that is an account about the *researcher* and the researcher's relationship to a specific subject. Ethnography as

that form of inquiry and writing that produces descriptions and accounts about the ways of life of the writer and those written about. (Denzin 1997:xi)

Denzin links the type and nature of research to the historical circumstances of its production, initially noting six 'moments' of ethnography that emerge specifically in relation to the development of Western capitalism. The years from the turn of the century until 1939 are associated with the capitalism of markets and foundational/traditional realist ethnographic texts, (the first moment). The Second World War until 1960 sees monopolistic capitalism and the 'Golden Age' of Modernism/High Modernism ethnography (second moment). From 1960 to the present, capitalism is multinational in nature corresponding with Post-modernism and a third moment of *Blurred Genres*, in which researchers develop more ethnographic theories, resulting in increasingly open-ended and pluralistic approaches. This results in a *Crisis of Representation* (fourth moment) in the mid-1980's, typified by the publication of *Writing Culture* (Clifford and Marcus, 1986), and debates around making ethnographic texts more reflexive as well as raising issues of gender, class and race. Finally Denzin describes the fifth moment approaching the millennium as, the process of, 'writing our way out of writing culture and into a still undefined Sixth Moment' (Denzin 1997:18).

For Denzin (2001) the logical development of this thinking is the 'seventh moment', his prescription for the twenty-first century ethnographer to be politicised and take sides. An approach such as Denzin's becomes problematic in a piece of research that wishes to highlight the experiences of Gypsy families on the south coast; it potentially opens the door to becoming an entirely autobiographical account of the researcher's experience of conducting research on Gypsies. So whilst Denzin's approach has not been adopted *per se*, it has been used to inform thinking within the research about subjectivity and objectivity in the research practice.

2.2.2 Subjectivity and Objectivity

Barone (1992) describes a 'dyadic relationship' between subjectivity and objectivity; terms that despite having opposite meanings, are 'logically dependent upon the other for its existence' (Barone 1992:26). In this sense, research might acknowledge the subjective positioning of the researcher within an objectively conducted piece of research. Unlike Denzin's 'seventh moment' (2001) such an approach maintains a subjective reflexivity without being entirely about the researcher.

In practice this might entail the researcher positioning him or herself within the research, in particular within the philosophical and analytical elements of the descriptive processes, but effectively anonymising or shielding personal feelings during the interview stage. Tyler (2006) for example describes living amongst a community of white, rural villagers to conduct a piece of research, which in some respects exposed their racist viewpoints. Tyler situates her (non-racist) self and her subjective viewpoints very clearly in this research but notes that,

I did not on the whole challenge white people's narratives that I considered racist. (2006:134)

Norman Denzin would be disappointed by such an admission, but Tyler's account is useful because it provides a depth of information to the research from which its positioning and validity can be assessed by the reader.

Discussing the tendency for academics to privilege objectivity over subjectivity, Eisner (1992) suggests that in practice researchers do not actually believe that '*complete* objectivity is possible' (1992:9) (author's original emphasis), and so the researcher signals their research can only be 'as objective as we can' (1992:9).

There is a widespread acknowledgement that research is conducted within degrees of objectivity in which there is a discrepancy between what objective researchers might wish to produce, with what they actually are able to deliver (Bhopal, 2010). Drawing on Newell (1986) Eisner describes processes of 'ontological objectivity' and 'procedural objectivity'; the first suggests understanding and representing the truth and the second is a methodological means to remove personal bias from the research process. Eventually Eisner freights his research with overwhelming philosophical problems including the impossibility of knowing truth and the consequent impossibility of measuring a view of reality that corresponds to the truth. In practice, if objective measurements cannot be framed in a workable and meaningful sense, then some subjects may never be examined. Despite this, Eisner remains a useful reference point in the process of sensitising research and the researcher,

We are better served by recognizing that whatever it is we think we know is a function of a transaction between the qualities of the world we cannot know in their pure, non-mediated form, and the frames of reference, personal skills, and individual histories we bring to them. (Eisner 1992:13)

Arguing for a commonality of approach, Eisner posits a researcher who participates in the plurality of cultures in the world, situating their personal standpoint within a framework of the world around them. Privileging the notion of 'experience' leads Eisner to suggest that procedural objectivity is actually just about consensus. Ontological objectivity however, with its need for an absolute view of the world, is unrealisable (Eisner 1992).

For qualitative researchers who reject the possibility of objectivity in their work, the question left hanging in the air is: what usefully replaces objectivity? Sarantakos (2005) suggests an individualised version of reality is the answer,

Researchers capture one aspect of reality – their reality – and this is what they can describe and present. Apart from this value neutrality is considered to be unattainable, unnecessary and undesirable. (Sarantakos, 2005: 94)

Sarantakos also suggests objectivity can be 'emergent' within qualitative research, evolving out of the subjectivities of those involved in the research (Sarantakos, 2005); whereas Guba and Lincoln (1989) argue that qualitative research is expected in part, to contain truth value, applicability, consistency and neutrality, and that some form of neutrality is a central element of qualitative research.

2.2.3 Consensus, Procedural Objectivity and the Researcher

Ideas of consensus abound in thinking about how communities and nation are imagined; Anderson (1991) for example argues that the nation is imagined into existence. Similarly in Bauman's work *sociation* is constructed through the building of consensual understandings of what it means to belong to the nation and through an oppositional relationship of friends and enemies (Bauman 1991).

The usefulness of procedural objectivity seems questionable if it is to be used to establish an unbiased view of an imagined condition or an imagined community. It certainly begs the question as to whether or not the consensus of the methodology is a reflection of the group under investigation, and how this may impact on the research process. For example, does the researcher belong to the community that he or she is investigating or are they an outsider? Does their account reflect the community under investigation (Gypsy families) or the world around them (non-Gypsy neighbours)?

In mounting a defence for objectivity Phillips (1989) argues for a greater distinction to be made between 'objectivity' and 'truth'; in particular noting that objectivity cannot be equated to certainty. Working within philosophical frameworks such as Popper's (1968) assertion that truth is tentative or unknown, Phillips suggests the researcher should not abandon the idea of truth, but rather come to terms with the difficulties, if not impossibilities, of producing objectively truthful research.

Phillips is critical of consensual research practices suggesting that 'qualitative objectivity', such as the collection of high quality data that has been exposed to critical questioning, is far more important than 'quantitative objectivity'; that is work that relies on presenting a large number of similar accounts to establish its validity. He suggests

acceptance of the *critical tradition*. A view that is objective is one that has been opened up to scrutiny, to vigorous examination, to challenge. (Phillips 2002:66)

Such work is more valuable than research that simply mirrors what others have produced. Phillips expands his attack on consensus-based research by examining how the research framework or paradigm is chosen. He dismisses the idea of relativism between paradigms, suggesting researchers should use objectivity to choose a paradigm and then to work within that paradigm. Identifying and working within such a paradigm should be an objective and critical process rather than simply about generating consensus.

2.2.4 Grounded Theory

Grounded Theory was first developed by Glaser and Strauss (1967, 1968) in the 1960's as a means of producing research in which the practical and theoretical methodology are developed and refined as the research itself is being conducted. It produces research that privileges and 'grounds' its theoretical findings within the empirical data. Glaser and Strauss produced work that was distinctive from the qualitative research methodology generally in use at the time, they

first articulated these strategies and advocated *developing* theories from research grounded in data rather than *deducing* testable hypotheses from existing theories. (Charmaz, 2006:4)

Charmaz notes how Glaser and Strauss merged two very different approaches in their work. She suggests that Glaser,

imbued grounded theory with dispassionate empiricism, rigorous codified methods, emphasis on emergent discoveries and its somewhat ambiguous specialised language that echoes quantitative methods. (Charmaz, 2006:7)

whilst Strauss brought,

notions of human agency, emergent processes, social and subjective meanings, problem-solving practices, and the open-ended study of action to grounded theory. (Charmaz, 2006:7)

In many respects the attraction of using grounded theory in this research is this historical context, in which rigorous qualitative work is generated that regards human behaviour as being determined by social actors imbued with agency. Using my past experiences of conducting research work with Gypsy communities I wanted to stress their agentic role in determining the outcomes of events in their lives; rather than produce work that whilst it did not ignore, also did not privilege the complex social constructivism of their lives. Grounded theory is also useful in producing theoretical accounts that relate local knowledge to a wider concept. Burawoy (1991) disputes this, arguing that grounded theory tends to produce over-ambitious generalisations from work that is situated within narrow times and spaces. However, Charmaz argues,

A contextualised grounded theory can start with sensitising concepts that address such concepts as power, global reach, and difference and end with inductive analyses that theorize connections between local worlds and larger social structures. (Charmaz 2006: 133)

By doing so Charmaz argues grounded theory is work that is effective not just in understanding power relations but also to produce work that works in a context of social justice (Charmaz 2005, 2005b, 2006)

Again this is an attractive method to use when producing work that looks at the local lives of Gypsies but also wants to recognise and acknowledge the impact of global, national and historical circumstances that have shaped their lives.

2.3 Research Design

2.3.1 Access

The process of gaining access to groups and becoming accepted by respondents can often be difficult and time-consuming (Walford, 2001). However, Hammersley and Atkinson (1983) note that gaining access is

also a time in which simply negotiating the practicalities of conducting the research is not the sole focus, rather the researcher also has opportunities to gain insights into the wider setting of the research.

Lee (1993) argues there are particular difficulties associated with researching sensitive or hard to reach groups. Potential respondents may not wish to expose themselves personally or even more generally as a member of a particular group. Often 'gatekeepers', individuals or organisations already trusted by the respondents, are seen as a means of gaining access to hard to reach groups. They are effective in situations where 'social access crucially depends on establishing *interpersonal trust*' (Miller and Bell, 2002: 53). Effectively the implicit trust in the gatekeeper is transferred to the researcher. In the case of Gypsy groups, the Traveller Education Service has often been used as one such gatekeeper (Bhopal, 2011; Bhopal and Myers, 2008). However, gatekeepers may exert an excessive amount of control including effectively blocking research or 'shepherding the fieldworker in one direction or another' (Hammersley and Atkinson, 1983: 65).

The history of this thesis had its genesis both in a project I was working on for the University of Southampton and Hampshire County Council, that specifically examined Gypsy and Traveller experiences of elective home education (Bhopal and Myers, 2009b), and, previous projects conducted on behalf of the Universities of Southampton and Greenwich, The Centre for Urban and Community Studies, Goldsmiths College and West Sussex County Council. One result of this work was that I had extensive contacts with Gypsy families living in the south-east of England and particularly along the south coast (West Sussex and Hampshire). With the agreement of the University of Southampton and Hampshire County Council I conducted interviews with families I was separately interviewing for the university project. All respondents were informed of the two separate strands to the research. In addition I also contacted other families from previous research projects who were known to me and used contacts amongst these families to generate other contacts for potential respondents.

My previous research work also meant I had extensive contacts with Traveller Education Service personnel working on the south coast. The Traveller Education Service remains a well-trusted connection between Gypsy families and schools, often used as gatekeepers to negotiate access by potential researchers (see Bhopal and Myers, 2008 for a fuller discussion). My close links at the time of the research with the Traveller Education Service was helpful in ensuring my credibility as a researcher could be validated by respondents.

2.3.2 Sample

The suitability of the initial sampling strategy for any piece of research is key to the final quality of the research findings (Cohen *et al*, 2007; Morrison, 1993). Qualitative studies generally employ a form of non-probability sampling that is based on accidental, purposive, snowball or theoretical sampling (Kuzel, 1992). The guidelines for sampling techniques in qualitative research are often dictated by a variety of issues and choices around the group who are being studied, the timescales for conducting the research, whether or not specific events or occasions are to be included within the research, and, the setting or context in which the research will be conducted (Miles and Huberman, 1994).

In this study, given the particular identity of the group being investigated, purposive sampling was used. Respondents were chosen because they were relevant to the project; they were from a particular ethnic group and had characteristics that were relevant to the study, (i.e. they were living within the geographical region of the study).

I originally intended interviewing 25 families. This was a figure based on my expectations of how far my contacts amongst the Gypsy community would generate potential interviewees. Eventually I interviewed 32 families. There were however, considerable differences between the interest and commitment shown towards the interview process; so on occasion an interview was terminated very quickly and little useful data gleaned. On other occasions respondents were very enthusiastic about the interview process and the interview would stretch over several hours. In some cases particular family members were already well known to me, or became familiar, as I spoke to many such respondents both before and after the formal research interview. During the period of the research I had occasionally worked as a tutor to primary school children and on several occasions this included working for Gypsy families, some of whom were themselves respondents or were known to other respondents who participated in the study.

The families interviewed represented a range of different backgrounds and whilst I was effectively happy to interview any Gypsy family on the south coast, I actively sought out families who represented a mix of different backgrounds including different ethnicities, (English Gypsies, Irish Travellers and Fairground Showmen); different accommodation status, (living on sites, in houses and on the road); different occupations; and, different levels of affluence.

There is one under-representation and two particular omissions from my respondents: mobile Travellers, New Age Travellers and Gypsies from mainland Europe who have recently arrived in the UK. These are discussed below;

Mobile Travellers

The numbers of Travellers without fixed accommodation has always been a difficult figure to accurately gauge; in this research only one such family was interviewed and that was a very brief interview. Despite following various leads to arrange other interviews, none materialised in the final research and I suspect they are a group who are under-represented in this research. In part this undoubtedly reflects the circumstance of individual lives (i.e. families being in transit and not necessarily regarding an interview as a major priority in their lives). However, other families currently housed or settled on a site were interviewed who had prior experience of a mobile travelling lifestyle and this was reflected within their wider accounts.

New Age Travellers

No New Age Travellers were interviewed on the basis that the research was intended to consider groups of people whose ethnicity defined them as Gypsies, specifically: English and Scottish Gypsies and Travellers who might be considered part of the diasporic movement from India; Fairground Showmen; and, Irish Travellers. In discussions with respondents New Age Travellers were often mentioned, generally disparagingly and invariably described as having no real relationship to Gypsies. However, in discussions about Gypsy identity and in particular discussions about how Gypsies were seen by non-Gypsies, New Age Travellers were included within the generic account of who non-Gypsies understood Gypsies to be. In retrospect it may have been fruitful to include New Age Travellers within the research, if only to pick up on the sense of the generic identity created by non-Gypsies. Interviewing New Age Travellers may also have undermined my relationship with Gypsies, who may have felt they did not wish to be represented as part of a wider generic grouping.

Gypsies from Mainland Europe

Gypsies who had recently arrived from mainland Europe were not included in the research as it was felt that, despite representing another aspect of the diasporic movement of ethnic Gypsies, their experiences and expectations were significantly different to those of established families based on the south coast of England.

2.4 Data Collection

2.4.1 Interviews

In-depth interviews were chosen as the primary means of data collection for this study. McCracken (1988) describes interviews as ‘conversations with a purpose’ and the intention was to generate such conversations between the interviewer and respondents. Such interviewing should facilitate the circumstances in which it is possible to listen to and hear what the respondent has to say; and by doing so, privileging respondents’ own words, language and narratives. As a result, participants are able to share their stories in ways that are familiar to them, and ways in which they feel comfortable to do so (Rubin and Rubin, 2005). Kvale (1996) notes that the interview is a social, interpersonal encounter and not just a data collection exercise. Within the unwritten script of the interview, it is the role of the interviewer to ensure that the respondent feels confident during the interview process by building rapport and trust (Kvale, 1996). Consequently, respondents should be encouraged to open up and discuss different aspects of their lives.

Semi-structured interviews were conducted with respondents. These were intended to form only the starting point of the research conversation. I actively encouraged participants to digress and diverge in their responses from the initial questions, with a view to collecting their holistic view of their relationships with their neighbours.

Many researchers have noted problems associated with conducting research with Gypsy communities, these include gaining access, agreeing terms on which interviews can be conducted, with particular concerns raised about issues such as the motives of researchers, and whether or not recordings should be made of interviews (see Bhopal, 2004; Levinson and Sparkes, 2004). With the agreement of respondents I digitally recorded interviews which were subsequently transcribed. Additionally I made handwritten notes during the interview which were also later transcribed. Many respondents preferred not to be recorded during their interviews but did give their consent to have written notes taken during the interview. If a respondent was unhappy with both recording and note-taking, I would simply talk to the respondent and write up my notes and thoughts at a later date.

In general this was a successful approach with many of the interviews continuing for long periods of time (up to two hours). A member of the Traveller Education Services who was involved in one of the education projects contacted me at one point because she knew a family who wished to participate in the research, in her words 'they are desperate to tell their story'. For many families this appeared to reflect their response to the research; it was an opportunity to talk about their lives and they found this an interesting, useful or novel experience. In other cases interviews were brief and to the point sometimes still generating useful data but on other occasions generating little data.

2.4.2 The Shape of Interviews

When arranging interviews I explicitly mentioned that I was interested in how 'families' thought about relationships with their neighbours, and would, when applicable, request interviews with both partners present. Throughout many of the interviews there was often a degree of fluidity in participation: so for example two family members might start the interview but one would leave early, or alternatively, an interview with one respondent might be joined by other participants at a later stage. In addition, some interviews were conducted with non-family members present. In such cases the additional presence of friends or neighbours was clearly regarded as acceptable by the main interviewee. On occasion the presence of another person was a condition for the interview to proceed. In terms of the research project, interruptions and fluidity in participation, was considered to highlight another dimension in which an understanding of the family could materialise.

In total 75 people participated, to a greater or lesser extent, within interviews with 32 families. 9 interviews were with individual family members only and 23 were conducted with more than one person. Included within the number of participants were non-family members who might have been asked to accompany the family member.

There were a variety of reasons for additional persons being present; these included female respondents not wanting to be alone with a male researcher, more general moral support, and, on occasion just the coincidental fact of someone being with the respondent at the time of the interview. A number of interviews were conducted with a member of Traveller Education Services present; and, generally at the instigation of the main respondent(s) they were often drawn into the conversation. On other occasions interviews took

place within a context of the interview being highly visible to other family or non-family members; although non-participatory, their proximity was noticeable throughout such interviews, (these people are not included in the numbers of participants detailed below). The interviews broke down as follows:

Participants	No. of Interviews
1 parent	9
2 parents	4
1 parent, 1 family member	4
1 parent, TES member	3
1 parent, 1 neighbour	1
2 parents, 1 family member	4
2 parents, 1 TES member	2
2 parents, 2 family members	1
2 parents, 1 family member, 1 TES member	2
1 parent, 1 family member, 1 TES member	1
2 parents, 4 family members, 2 TES members	1

Table 2.1 Numbers of participants in interview

Inevitably every interview was different; the following two examples highlight and give a flavour of the more fluid levels of participation that occurred during the project.

Example 1. Interview with the T.s and the K.s

These interviews took place on a local authority site. Having driven on to the site and parked, I was immediately accosted by two boys, (probably about 12 years old), and asked what my business was. They were very friendly and after a quick chat gave me directions to Mrs T.'s trailer. A number of men were either working on cars or sitting in the cabs of vans chatting. As I passed them I nodded and said hello and they returned my greetings. I felt, from the chat with the boys and from the friendly though disinterested greetings from the men on the site, that my visit was well known, (i.e. residents on the site had been pre-warned that I was coming).

Mrs T. came out of her trailer to say hello, invited me inside and introduced me to Mrs K. I had an appointment arranged to interview Mrs K. after Mrs T., however, after a brief discussion, it was agreed I would go ahead with Mrs T.'s interview with Mrs K. present. In the very first minutes of meeting, (i.e. before the interview proper started), we discussed quickly my background, my awareness that Mrs T.

wouldn't talk to me on her own and people we knew in common. Mrs K. and Mrs T. also both made clear their willingness to talk in front of each other and pointed out they were in fact sisters, (I had not been aware of this prior to the interview). Throughout the first interview both sisters spoke amongst each other and to me; although the interview remained distinctly Mrs T.'s it was a still clearly shaped in part by discussions and asides she was having with her sister.

As I was wrapping up the interview with Mrs T. we were joined by her mother who was immediately included within the conversation by her daughters. At this point, and at the instigation of the sisters, their mother was solicited for her views on the issues we had discussed throughout Mrs T.'s interviews. She provided an interesting confirmation of much that Mrs T. had to say and also talked about their background and past experiences.

I then officially began a separate interview with Mrs K. who, like her sister, spoke volubly about her life and also brought her sister and mother into the discussion. As this interview drew to a close the mother left but we were then joined by Mrs T.'s elder son. He was quizzed by Mrs T. for his opinions on some of the topics we had discussed, (in particular relations with the police and the site manager), and although he was fairly reticent he did still contribute to the interview.

Throughout the interview I was aware of interest being shown in what was happening inside the trailer. We were interrupted on occasion by children and we remained visible throughout to other families on the site. After the interview I spoke in passing to some other residents on the site on the introductions of Mrs T. and was asked to convey a message back to a Traveller Education Services officer who we knew in common.

Example 2. Interview with the F.s

This interview was arranged by the Traveller Education Services, who suggested Mrs F. was 'very keen' to be interviewed. However, I was also warned that Mr F. might not want the interview to go ahead and to be prepared to only be told of this when we arrived. It was also agreed that a TES officer would be present throughout the interview at Mrs F.'s request.

I arrived at the F.s house with a TES officer and we were both lead into the F.'s kitchen by Mrs F. where we sat down and had a cup of tea. Mr F. very suddenly arrived in the kitchen and immediately started to question me about my background and role in a slightly hostile fashion. After this initial questioning Mr F.

decided to participate fully in the interview with his wife. Both partners were very voluble in their responses and both continually played ideas off each other, asking the other's opinion and recalling each other's past experiences. As the interview progressed they also increasingly involved the TES officer in the conversation. In part this was to clarify or confirm specific points; but it also became apparent they felt close to the TES officer even describing her as 'one of the family'.

After an hour or so of the interview Mr F.'s nephew knocked on the front door, he was invited into the kitchen and brought into the conversation by the F.s. Shortly afterwards the F.s eldest son and girlfriend and their eldest daughter also arrived and were again drawn into the conversation. Finally another member of the TES arrived; she was also clearly well known to the family and was promptly drawn into the conversation.

For the purpose of the interview the bulk of data was drawn from the initial conversation with Mr and Mrs F., both of whom were very engaged in the interview process. The conversation(s) that followed and developed with multiple participants were unplanned and unpredictable, but they clearly informed the wider picture of the research and did so in a useful fashion

Whilst conducting interviews such as those with Mrs T. and Mrs K. and that with the F.s I felt it was important to allow the interview to develop in an organic fashion around the wishes of respondents. It would have felt unnatural, and I suspect would have been counter-productive, to try and insist on a rigorous set of interview procedures that did not acknowledge respondents' own ideas of what constituted a comfortable conversation.

2.4.3 The Role of the Researcher

By its very nature qualitative research engages the researcher more directly and in a more personal way than quantitative research, echoing something of Denzin's (1997) argument that ethnography should be both about the ethnographer and the researched. It enables deeper and richer understandings of the research topic than those found in quantitative research in particular allowing a 'plurality of voices' (Reed, 2000:1) to be represented. Unlike quantitative research however, and in some respects this is a consequence of the centrality of the researcher role in the research, it is research that may be challenged for its subjectivity or alternatively a tendency towards relativism.

Reflexivity

Woodward (2007) discusses the difficulties faced by feminists wanting to produce research that,

might want to challenge existing regimes of truth and assert another; thus they are split between 'truth' and objectivity on the one hand and relativism on the other. (Woodward, 2007:56)

There is a certain irony that the more reflexive the researcher becomes, the more difficult it is to make an assertion of what constitutes 'truth'. Woodward's solution is to adapt Donna Haraway's call for a more partial 'socially situated knowledge' (Haraway; 1991:188) by necessitating the

situating (of) the researcher who seeks knowledge and the recognition that knowledge is both partial and situated. (Woodward, 2007:56)

DeVault (1990) warns that researchers who are 'situated actors' need to be mindful of the nature of their participative roles in the research process and how this affects the research relationship. However, being situated within the research in some respects overcomes the problems of being an 'outsider' amongst 'insiders'; it confers an acknowledged status on the researcher's role, one that can be managed so as to be understood not just by the researcher but also by the researched.

In principle reflexivity supports the notion of non-hierarchical relationships in the research process (Reinharz, 1992),

researchers who self-disclose are reformulating the researcher's role in a way that maximises engagement of the self but also increases the researcher's vulnerability to criticism, both for what is revealed and for the very act of self-disclosure' (Reinharz, 1992: 34).

More generally it is widely acknowledged that researchers should contemplate the moral and emotional aspects of their research (Behar, 1996; Denzin, 1997; Richardson, 1997).

Power

Bhopal has argued that power is based on a continuum that continually shifts during the interview process (Bhopal, 2006). Charmaz describes how,

Relative differences in power and status may be acted on and played out during an interview. Powerful people may take charge, turn the interview questions to address topics on their own terms, and control the timing, pacing and length of the interview. Both powerful and disempowered individuals may distrust their interviewers, the sponsoring institutions, and the stated purpose of the research, as well as how the findings might be used. (Charmaz, 2006:27)

Whilst it might seem apparent that power in the interview process sits most obviously with the interviewer, that may not necessarily be the case; in part the process of reflections allows for judgements to be made about how the interview was conducted, and how and when, power shifted between researcher and the researched.

Gender

Gender has also been seen as an issue that may influence research generally and the interview process in particular. Reinharz and Chase (2001) suggest that women from different backgrounds are more likely than men to want to participate in interviews and are also more willing to discuss sensitive issues. It has also been reported that men feel uncomfortable and threatened within one-to-one interviews, in part because of a perceived ambiguity about their status, (or loss of status), during the interview (Schwalbe and Wolkomir, 2002). The gender of the interviewer may also play a significant role in how an interview is conducted, Charmaz notes,

When the interviewer is a man, gender dynamics may enter the interview. When the interviewer and participant are both women, class, age and/or race and ethnic differences may still influence how the interview proceeds. (Charmaz, 2006: 28).

Ethnicity

Researchers have explored how the respective ethnicity of the researcher and the respondent can have a significant impact on the research (Bhopal, 2001; Phoenix, 2001). Rhodes has argued that

Closeness of identity and in particular shared racial identity is generally presumed to promote effective communication between researcher and subject, and conversely, disparate identity to inhibit it' (Rhodes 1994:550).

Brah (1996) however, has argued that although the positioning of those from minority backgrounds can create opportunities for understanding differences,

diasporic or border positionality does not *in itself* assure a vantage point of privileged insight into and understanding of relations of power, although it does create a space in which experiential mediations may intersect in ways that render such understandings more readily accessible (Brah, 1996: 207, original emphasis).

Bhopal (2001) has contrasted her positioning as an Asian woman in her relationships with her female Asian respondents, with her positioning as an 'outsider' when interviewing Gypsy and Traveller women. She notes

how in both cases she was able to gain access and build trust with respondents from different communities, but that in each case different processes needed to be observed. Gunaratnam states

Seeking to recognise how 'race', ethnicity and other social differences are produced and have effects in qualitative interviews is undoubtedly difficult and messy work. Rather than trying to fix this mess with methodological strategies such as matching or analyses that erase the complexities of difference and power relations in the interview, there is much to be achieved by distrusting any neatness, and actively searching out and valuing the complexity and richness that comes with that mess' (2003: 104).

The researcher is better served by becoming situated and recognisably situated, within his or her research, conducting work that acknowledges the impact of his or her race on the researched group.

2.4.4 Interview style and interview process

I planned interviews on the basis of conducting three discrete stages:

1. Introductions

I introduced myself, described the nature of the research to the respondents and outlined issues such as informed consent, anonymity and confidentiality in the research process and answered any questions they might have about the research.

2. The Interview

Using my semi-structured interview schedule we discussed respondents' relations with their non-Gypsy neighbours.

3. Concluding Comments

I thanked the respondents for their time, reiterated issues such as their anonymity and rights to withdraw from the research and asked them if they had any further questions or queries about the research.

Whilst a number of interviews did proceed on this basis, many did not, and I felt that on these occasions, and on the basis of my intention to allow respondents to present their own stories/accounts, I would always allow the respondent to dictate the pace and direction of the interview.

Alternative interview patterns

Two particular alternative patterns emerged in the way respondents shaped the interviews. In the first of these, typically the respondent came to the interview process with a pre-determined view of what they wished to say and the introductory session would either be cut short or totally dismissed. My response would be to try and continue the interview to cover other ground from the semi-structured interview schedule and return to the introductory information at a later date. However, some respondents delivered a very specific account and were unwilling to be drawn into a fuller discussion. So for example one respondent only wished to discuss accommodation concerns and had no interest in my wider research interests, (or the introductory/concluding information and comments). My response to this was to accept that this was the respondent's considered response to the research.

The other typical pattern that would emerge in a number of interviews was that my role and background would be questioned in great detail. Generally this happened after making some brief introductions, but on occasions it would be the first topic of conversation. Arriving for one interview on a local authority site my role and background were questioned in great detail immediately upon arrival, before I had opened the car door. My interpretation, was that this often felt as though my personal role and my personal background were being challenged, by a series of questions and probes designed to establish my credentials and positioning (Myers, 2010). My response was to reply to such questioning in as detailed a fashion as possible. Generally such detailed questioning tended to presage an interview in which the respondents were engaged with the research and such interviews often produced the richest data.

2.4.5 My role as a researcher

I felt that my presentation of self had a clear impact on how the research progressed. I was also conscious that the self I present to the world and to my respondents; or perhaps more accurately, the *interpretation* placed upon my presentation of self, differs from the version of myself that I understand to be true.

If asked to outline the bare bones of my identity and who I am, I would probably note the following: I am a middle-aged, white man, a British citizen of mixed ethnicity, from a working class background. If asked how I think I am perceived by others I would probably suggest I am seen as a white, middle-class man. I temper

some of my behaviours depending on circumstances, so for example I am also a poet and have regularly given poetry readings throughout my life; on such occasions my accent thickens and I signal elements of my background at a heightened level. But for the purposes of this research I behaved in much the same fashion that I would in my public/working life generally. The one *codicil* I would add is that I paid greater attention to my dress than I would normally; my usual work attire is a suit and tie. For the interviews I invariably wore a jacket, shirt, black jeans and brown suede boots. I believe this was a conscious desire for my dress to signify and be recognisable as an established, credible academic. I am not entirely sure why I considered a suit to be too formal in this process, which was clearly designed to introduce a sartorial formality on my part, but for the purposes of conducting interviews I did not wear suits.

I was conscious that small changes in appearance and presentation affected my reception, though not necessarily in clearly defined ways that would significantly alter respondents' responses. For example I had access to two cars when driving to interviews; a Citroen Picasso that was a cheapish, unfussy family *mpv* and a Mercedes Benz two-door, sports car. Without ever having a direct conversation about the car I was driving, I felt respondents made a different judgement about my status and personality, depending upon the car I was driving. In addition to the ephemera of dress and vehicle ownership, other more obvious distinctions such as class/status, gender, ethnicity and power all had a bearing on the interviews and these are briefly discussed below.

Class/Status

Some respondents assumed that my status as a researcher enabled me to have a positive impact upon the lives of Gypsies; either in a general sense or in relation to something specific to them. This mirrors my experience of other research projects with Gypsies. There was often an underlying assumption, often promoted by the nature of the research, (e.g. a project intended to improve 'good practice' in schools), that as a researcher I had access to types of power not available to respondents. In some respects this was true; following the research I have been called upon by respondents to submit written testimony to their status as ethnic Gypsies when engaged in planning disputes, and also on occasion, to speak at a Parish Council meeting on behalf of a neighbour, (who was also a respondent).

In the general scheme of things I would shy away from making claims about my status in the world and certainly never suggested this research had the potential to dramatically change respondents' lives. However, it was clear that in some respects I was perceived as having access to a degree of influence that was missing

from many respondents' lives, and, this was possibly a factor in influencing their decisions about participating in the research. It was also true that when, in the example given above, I spoke at a Parish Council meeting I deliberately represented myself as a white, middle-class academic entitled to be treated as an expert in my field. By doing so I exercised power that was generally not available to most respondents.

Gender

When conducting research with Gypsy families it is often difficult for male researchers to conduct interviews with female Gypsies. In particular there is often a total prohibition on a female Gypsy being alone with a man who is not her husband (Okely, 1983).

In some respects the nature of this research with its emphasis on the family was helpful because it encouraged husbands and wives to be interviewed together. On other occasions different means were used to avoid any problems. Quite often interviews were arranged where other family members or friends would be present. Sometimes for example, when a mother was willing to participate in the research to a greater extent than her husband, there would be a preliminary element to the interview when the husband would participate, after which the husband would depart. On other occasions there would be repeated interruptions, (rarely in a disruptive fashion), to the interview by family members. Some interviews were scheduled in public places such as in cafes or the public spaces of the local education authority.

In some respects being a male researcher had a positive impact on encouraging family participation. On a number of occasions, following the initial introductory passage of the interview, and having been told the husband would shortly have to leave to conduct some other business, in fact the husband would remain and contribute to the entire interview. It was also apparent that much previous research on Gypsies has tended to be carried out by female researchers talking to female respondents (Okely, 1983; Bhopal *et al*, 2000; Derrington and Kendall, 2004); however, in this research there was a consistent input from male respondents which in itself is unusual.

Finally I would note that one fairly common occurrence in the interview process that seemed to be related to my gender was that many interviews often started with an initially aggressive and questioning challenge to my role. These challenges often seemed to be designed to test my nature, rather than establish any facts about the research. My own observation was that on a number of occasions I felt as though I was passing a 'test' prior to the family agreeing to participate in the interview.

Ethnicity

Despite coming from a mixed background I have very white skin. Throughout the interviews in this research and previous research, respondents have occasionally made overtly racist comments about black, Asian and other non-white communities. In this respect the passage of this research was conducted easily: I fitted a certain stereotype of a white, male interviewer. In the past I have worked on projects focussing on Gypsy and Traveller communities where the interviews have been divided between myself and an Asian woman researcher. On such occasions it often felt we received two identical accounts of the research data, which were tempered through marginally different filters.

2.5 Analysis

2.5.1 The Research Process

Strauss and Corbin (1998) identify five stages in the research design of a grounded theory research project:

1. Selection of the research project. Choosing a topic and relevant methodology.
2. Construction of the research topic. Defining the project boundaries, conducting literature reviews and generating questions.
3. Theoretical Sampling. Choosing settings, events and respondents to be included in the research.
4. Data Collection and Analysis. To include initial data collection and open coding followed by more refined and selective coding as themes and categories are identified. Testing propositions and hypotheses, reaching theoretical saturation and developing theory.
5. Reporting. Producing a written account of the research.

Selection of the research project

My initial research identified Gypsies and their relationships with their neighbours, both as an under explored topic and also an interesting one. The obvious means of gathering rich data was to speak to respondents and this was best done using interviews.

Construction of the research topic

The research topic had the potential to generate new theoretical perspectives by working from a perspective of 'families' and 'neighbours'; both of these are relevant categories within the lives of respondents but rarely mentioned in the literature. Specific project boundaries included restricting interviews to Gypsy respondents, as the research was intended to highlight their experience, and, the geographical limits of the South coast being used, recognising my limits as a researcher.

Theoretical Sampling

As discussed previously this was based on gaining access to the sample in which I was in a position to negotiate. A purposive sampling approach was used to identify suitable respondents to participate in the research.

Data Collection and Analysis

Data was collected from transcribed interviews, notes of interviews and general recollections of places and events.

The data was coded thematically using an initial set of codes based on the research questions, e.g. ethnicity, work, income, education, family and community. Beyond these initial themes further themes were identified as the interviews progressed and were related to wider themes. So for example when considering a subject such as 'citizenship', in and of itself this was not a specific topic that emerged in the interviews, (largely because I was discussing respondents' daily experiences of their lives rather than an academic discourse defined as 'citizenship'). However, aspects of citizenship were discussed at length, some, such as education already appearing as a pre-determined theme; others such as 'policing' emerged during the interviews.

Much of the coding and analysis was carried out using paper, pencil and highlighter pens, the data was revisited and was specifically used as a means by which to understand the research from my perspective as a researcher. Theoretical saturation was considered to have been reached when the interviews began to highlight continuing similar patterns that could be understood coherently within a unified, generic theoretical understanding of the data.

Reporting

The research was written up as PhD thesis. A more detailed consideration of the writing process is detailed in the next section.

2.5.2 Writing up the research

Clifford (1986) suggests ethnographic texts constitute a system or economy of truth in which, what is included and what is excluded, the inflections, narrative effects and intonations applied to the text, render a specific set of meanings. In this sense the ethnographic account can also be a fiction, not in the sense that it presents a false account, but in a sense of being a constructed text that, 'suggests the partiality of cultural and historical truths, the ways they are systematic and exclusive' (Clifford 1986:6). Authorial intent has a direct impact on the finished text as does the experience and expectation of the reader. This research is written in a fashion primarily designed to satisfy the requirements of a PhD thesis and so inevitably there is a degree of authorial intent that specifically works to that end.

More specifically Clifford describes six ways ethnographic writing is constructed:

(1) contextually (it draws from and creates meaningful social milieux); (2) rhetorically (It uses and is used by expressive conventions); (3) institutionally (one writes within, and against, specific traditions, disciplines, audiences); (4) generically (an ethnography is usually distinguishable from a novel or travel account); (5) politically (the authority to represent cultural realities is unequally shared and at times contested); (6) Historically (all the above conventions and constraints are changing). These determinations govern the inscription of coherent ethnographic fictions. (Clifford 1986:6)

These all have a bearing on the process of writing this thesis; in terms of Clifford's first four descriptors the writing follows much that is predictable within an academic account. The research is constructed contextually in an identifiable and to some extent a generic manner that would recognisably sit within other work that looks at the lives of Gypsies and life in Britain; and, it uses an equally recognisable academic rhetoric in order to achieve this. In this respect one significant institution that is recognisable in the thesis is other work that might be described as 'Gypsy or Romany Studies'; this research situates itself in relation to such work, at times challenging and at other times sitting alongside it.

Perhaps more interesting and stimulating to any research work is the political and historical conventions and challenges suggested by Clifford. In some part the process of completing this work involved a growing sense of political authority that is a consequence of writing about Gypsies. In addition to writing the thesis I have also authored a book about Gypsy identity, academic journal articles and chapters in academic books. This process positioned me directly in terms of respondents and generated a degree of credibility that was recognised by respondents as a consequence of conducting the research. I was for example asked by respondents to contribute to their planning applications in my role as a recognised academic expert; and therefore, able to provide a credible assertion to a local authority that they were, from an ethnic perspective, Gypsies. There is a clear skewing of political power in the context of writing about a group; the more so in the case of Gypsy families who may find in their everyday lives some aspects of their culture and background are directly challenged by the state. In addition, there is also a clear gift to my personal vanity to be handed a degree of accessible political power; tempered I would say by a desire on my own part to use such political credibility in order to promote the interests of Gypsy families. In other words, and despite considerable attempts at procedural objectivity, the writing reflects a sympathetic account on my part and one that is willing to be engaged politically in its subject matter.

Clifford also mentions the historicity of ethnography and this is something I have tried to reflect if not in the primary data and analysis then in the margins of the writing. Throughout the research narrative accounts about Gypsies emerged in the media; some more sympathetic and some less so and these accounts are often noted and related to the wider research.

2.6 Ethical issues

Ethical standards were adhered to in the research, based on the British Sociological Association and the British Educational Research Association's Guidelines.

Robson (1993: 33) describes ten specific practices that should be avoided when conducting research: involving people without their consent, coercing individuals to participate, withholding information about the true nature of the project, deceiving participants, encouraging participants to hinder respondents' self-esteem, violating rights of self-determination, exposing participants to mental harm, invading privacy, withholding benefits from participants and not treating participants fairly.

Simons and Usher (2000) argue that ethics are 'situated' and are dependent on individual circumstances and situations,

while ethics have traditionally been seen as a set of general principles invariantly and validly applied to all situations...on the contrary, ethical principles are mediated within different research practices and thus take on different significances in relation to those practices' (Simons and Usher, 2000: 1).

Conducting this research I was conscious of a number of dilemmas that highlighted the situatedness of my respondents. These were largely resolved by strictly adhering to a policy of protecting the anonymity of my respondents. Typically such dilemmas would entail a respondent openly discussing actions that might have a negative consequence for them if widely known. For example, respondents who were claiming state benefit payments and working would potentially lose future benefit payments, and, possibly be prosecuted for previous claims. Other respondents described breaches of planning law, engaging in activities prohibited under their tenancy terms on local authority sites and some other criminal activities. In all cases I adopted the approach that the research should not be responsible for revealing such activity and as such (as agreed) I maintained respondents' confidentiality.

2.6.1 Informed Consent

Informed consent is defined as,

the procedures in which individuals choose whether to participate in an investigation after being informed of facts that would be likely to influence their decisions' (Diener and Crandall, 1978).

Informed consent was obtained from all respondents. In the majority of cases this was done orally. A substantial number of respondents were not able to read or write at all, or had only a limited ability to read and write. For such respondents signing an informed consent form would have been valueless. A large number of other respondents, (this includes respondents who could read and write and respondents who did not discuss their reading and writing skills), also preferred to adopt an oral agreement of informed consent rather than a signed informed consent.

Informed consent was discussed in detail with all respondents to ensure they were given adequate information about the project so that they were able to make an informed choice about participating in the

research. Those who gave oral consent were given the same information as that provided on the consent form.

2.6.2 Anonymity

Respondents were assured of privacy, anonymity and confidentiality throughout. This was particularly important for the group under study, given some of the past experiences of Gypsy and Traveller families with previous research (see also Bhopal and Myers, 2008). Respondents were assured that they would not be identified in any research reports or dissemination involved as part of the study. Many respondents were cautious about this and were also keen that the area in which they lived would not be identified. Care was taken to ensure that respondents would not be – in any way – identified from their responses or from descriptions of their homes, schools and employment. Respondents were also assured that only the researcher would have access to recordings and transcriptions of interviews, so that confidentiality was assured.

2.7 Conclusions

This research adopted a qualitative ethnographic approach to understand the lives of Gypsies living on the South coast of England and their relationships with their neighbours. It was conducted within ethical guidelines that protected respondents and also from a reflective perspective in order to promote honest and truthful accounts. Using grounded theory it relates the local circumstances of Gypsy families' daily lives to a wider understanding of their identities and relationships with non-Gypsies.

Chapter 3 Literature Review

3.1 Introduction

The literature review outlines previous work about Gypsies and also considers the wider theoretical work used to underpin this thesis. It begins with a discussion of the groups of people encompassed by the term Gypsy and how contested understandings of who Gypsies are have circulated within academic discourses. This section outlines work that might be described as falling within the area of 'Gypsy or Romany Studies'. Following this more wide ranging discussion the literature review concentrates on work that has examined the lives of Gypsies in the UK.

The literature review concentrates on a discussion of Gypsy groups within the UK. However, the linkage between international and national communities is also described in terms of physical, geographic and historical links, and, also in terms of the symbolic significance associated with such linkage. In discussing Gypsies in the UK there is a discussion of their distinguishing characteristics and how as a group, people described as Gypsies, are situated in the national sense. The thesis argues that Gypsies are distanced from the wider non-Gypsy population and that this materialises not just in terms of physical spatial distance but also in terms of cultural distance. Having discussed the distance that exists between Gypsies and non-Gypsies there is a consideration of the 'otherness' and 'othering' of Gypsies, that might contribute to their position in relation to the non-Gypsy population. Finally the relationship between Gypsies and non-Gypsies is examined in terms of their social interactions as 'neighbours' and how such relationships might be understood. These relationships are contextualised within post-World War Two citizenship debates, which are used as a starting point to consider social and political relations between Gypsies and non-Gypsies. The relationship between neighbours is developed to understand wider notions of who belongs and who does not belong within the nation state.

3.2 Who Are The Gypsies?

'Who Are The Gypsies?' is a question that appears with great regularity as the opening chapter title or sub-heading in a number of academic texts about Gypsies (see Kenrick and Bakewell, 1990; Mayall, 2004; O'Hanlon and Holmes, 2004; and, Clark and Greenfields, 2006). This reflects the difficulty that is often faced when describing a group of people who can be understood in different ways, many of which are not incorporated within simple ethnic or national boundaries. When discussing who Gypsies are, there is also a problem regarding the nomenclature associated with certain groups of people who may or may not be known in certain circumstances as Gypsies and the extent to which different groups of people may be encompassed by the nomenclature of Gypsies and associated terms. This section considers who Gypsies are and what links them as a body of people. A discussion of nomenclature is to be found in the following section 3.3.

3.2.1 The Gypsy diaspora: Linguistics, diaspora and the imagination.

There is a substantial body of evidence that demonstrates Gypsies are a diasporic people who emerged from northern India and migrated towards and throughout Europe. However, it is also a body of knowledge that is contentious in every degree; within academic work it has been explained and quantified differently and remains open to widely varying interpretations as to what meaning can be attached to it (see Fraser, 1992; Hancock, 1995; 2006; 2010a; Liégeois, 1986; Liégeois, and Gheorghe 1994; Mayall, 2004). This section will briefly examine three typical accounts of the Gypsy diaspora. The first typified by writers such as Ian Hancock who stresses the primacy of Indian ethnicity at the heart of modern Gypsy lives. The second by writers such as Judith Okely, whilst not disputing the diasporic movement suggests it has little relevance to modern day identities, which are described as being shaped in a social constructionist manner. Finally this section considers work that has sought to acknowledge both a greater co-existence between primordial and social-constructionist accounts; and also acknowledges, how the term 'Gypsy' may encompass groups of people whose heritage relates to India *and* groups of people with no such link. This section discusses how these different accounts are used to promote particular types of knowledge, in particular linking the different accounts to their wider impacts beyond the specialised field of 'Gypsy or Romany studies'.

Language and linguistics has particular relevance when discussing the Gypsy diaspora because it has been a key field within wider Gypsy and Romany studies for establishing credible evidence about migration

patterns. Quoting from Alexandre Paspatis's (1870) 19th century linguistic work, Fraser (1992) notes how within Romany studies there is a strong suggestion that the history of the Gypsy people can only truly be understood through the study of their language. Fraser himself questions,

How far (the study of language) can be equated with the origin and evolution of Romani-speakers is a more speculative matter, and the equivalence cannot be taken for granted. (1992:10)

He turns to a linguistic analysis to 'fill the initial void' in the knowledge of Gypsy history in order to 'make good what history has failed to record'. Ironically perhaps, and as will be discussed, linguistics has provided much of the source material for disputing wider accounts of who Gypsies are. Anderson (1991) described nations as imagined communities; a shared body of knowledge binds large numbers of community members together despite these members being personally unknown to each other. This has a potential resonance within work that seeks to describe Gypsies in global terms, or as a Gypsy or Romany, nation in the face of historic marginalisation and dispersal (Bancroft, 2005). In particular attempts to provide an account of national self-hood such as those promoted by Ian Hancock (2010a) bear something of the hallmarks of an imagined nationalistic, celebratory account designed to elevate and ennoble the Romany nation.

3.2.2 Ian Hancock and the primacy of the Indian diaspora: Rajput warriors

Kenrick (2004) suggests that direct links between Gypsy communities in Europe and the Indian sub-continent can be evidenced through common language traits, cultural practice and appearance and a small body of historic evidence from 15th century Gypsies suggesting they described themselves in terms of a history that stretched back to India. He also argues that the 'Romany people' formed as a distinct group of people after their initial migration from the sub-continent, they

formed outside, rather than inside, India, between the seventh and tenth centuries. Indian immigrants from various tribes intermarried and intermixed in Persia, forming into a people there with the name Dom (later Rom), and a large number of them then moved into Europe. Their descendants are the Romany Gypsies of today. (Kenrick, 2004: 4)

The linguist Ian Hancock suggests that the main evidence for an Indian link can be found through comparative study of Romany and Indian languages and has suggested that Gypsies can be linked to a military caste that left India in response to Islamic military successes (Hancock 1970, 2000a, 2000b). He initially argued that certain words that appear within Romany languages could have military connotations

and used this to assert that Romanys derive from a warrior caste or *Rajputs* (Hancock, 1998 (quoted in Matras 2004), 1999, 2002). As will be discussed below Matras (2002, 2004) disputes Hancock's linguistic scholarship fairly comprehensively. In turn, Hancock has repeatedly addressed this issue at greater length (Hancock 2010a, 2010b), producing more evidence of military vocabulary and linguistic links. He also notes that 'a military origin for Romanies, generally as captives, is not a new idea' (Hancock 2010b:55), and evidences scholarship since the nineteenth century that has supported links to a military caste from a non-linguistic perspective (in particular de Goeje, 1876; Clarke, 1878; Leland, 1882; and Burton, 1898).

Hancock is renowned as both an academic, he is a Professor of Linguistics at the University of Texas, but also as a leading Romani political figure campaigning for Romani rights and publicising the global oppression of Romani people. In work such as *We Are The Romany People: Ame Sam e Rromane Džene*, (Hancock, 2002), he adopts a campaigning tone, (something that infuses a great deal of his work), to generate sympathy and understanding for Romany people from non-Romany people. In many respects the unusual use of 'We' in the title flags up the book's intention of delineating those who are and those who are not Romany people. As in much of his other work (e.g. Hancock, 1987) he accurately surveys and documents the oppression of Gypsies by non-Gypsies throughout their diasporic travails and counters work that seeks to minimise or disregard Gypsy histories (Hancock, 2000c). Hancock also argues that the 'Romany people' are a specific group who solely originated from India and that the use of the term Gypsy is a derogatory name used by non-Romany people. Another trait of Hancock's work that is apparent in *We Are The Romany People: Ame Sam e Rromane Džene*, is a tendency to ascribe a Romany name to particular events within the Romany diaspora; most famously the holocaust and the genocide of European Romanys by the Nazis is referred to as *O Baro Porrajamos*, meaning 'the devouring'. Such linguistic devices are freighted with symbolic significance and seem designed to promote the political ambitions of Hancock's work; Matras (2002) notes that such labels are inventions that would not be recognised by most Romany speakers.

3.2.3 Judith Okely and the social constructionists

The anthropologist Judith Okely has argued very strongly that although groups of people whose Gypsy heritage can be linked back to the Indian sub-continent arrived in Britain in the fifteenth century, they later mixed with and became associated with other itinerant groups throughout the United Kingdom, and that

Gypsies in the UK, are descended from this more heterogeneous mix of people (Okely, 1983). She particularly notes how Irish Travellers do not speak Romany or any other language with an Indian origin, but rather speak their own *Gammon* or *Shelta* dialects, reflecting their own local origins. Okely further suggests it is more useful to engage with the lives of Gypsies today, rather than being stuck in a discussion about what happened over 1000 years ago. The difference in opinion over the relative importance of the linkage to India has led to a wide and volatile disagreement between scholars such as Judith Okely and Donald Kenrick; Okely for example noting Kenrick's public statement that he wished her book was burned (private communication). Kenrick has also recently described accounts similar to Okely's by Wim Willems and Leo Lucassen as 'mediaeval'; in the sense that, they fail to take into account 500 years of scholarship (Kenrick 2004:7). Okely (1983) seems to regard the importance placed upon Indian links as either the resurfacing of romanticised and exoticised accounts of Gypsies, or alternatively, as determined by political exigency.

Willems (1997) explicitly argues that much of the emphasis placed upon Indian origins, linguistic or otherwise, derives from the influence of Grellmann's (1783) early account of Gypsies. Grellmann outlined a unified description of a number of diverse groups of people throughout Europe who exist beyond the margins of respectable society. Willems suggests that Grellmann's account wrongly links diverse groups who were not associated and wrongly assumes they speak a common Romani language. Furthermore, he suggests Grellmann does not deploy a significant amount of empirical knowledge but rather taps successfully into the spirit of the times; by producing a colourful account of an exotic group and also by promoting the notion of a distinct ethnically bounded group. The importance of the latter derives from contemporaneous ideas such as Herder's (1877-1913) about national spirit, Willems notes

This gave impetus to a grail-like search for the elemental foundations of the national past, but the arrangement and classification led inevitably to a hierarchy of peoples, values and ways of living within which the Gypsies were allocated a lowly position. (1997:295)

Grellmann's account of Gypsy identity works therefore to socially construct a popular account of who Gypsies are that matches the expectations of the wider population and at the same time positions them as at the bottom of the social pile. Willems continues his arguments about the social construction of Gypsies by examining the work of nineteenth century Gypsiologists and folklorists such as Borrow (1914, 1982), who sought to meet with Gypsies and record their experiences in a more sympathetic light than Grellmann. Willems suggests again they have a tendency to homogenise their descriptions of diverse Gypsy groups

rather than discover difference. A trend that Willems feels was continued in the Nazi policy that 'maintained the idea of the 'true Gypsy' as the prototypical nomad' (1997:299). More than anything else, Willems rejects work that has sought to bind diverse groups together despite different experiences based upon a common language.

3.2.4 The New Romany Studies: a broader perspective

Yaron Matras (2002) has produced the most comprehensive accounts of similarity between Romany and Indian languages and argues that there is conclusive evidence that the two are linked. Matras also suggests that Okely and Willems fail to understand the significance of linguistic evidence and how it might be understood in terms of their own work. Matras (2004) argues that there are two different groups of people known as Gypsies; one group being 'the social phenomenon of communities of peripatetics or commercial nomads, irrespective of origin or language' and the other for whom Gypsy is an ethnonym (ethnic name) for a group of people whose language is Romany. Matras suggests that Okely cannot accept a division between the two different types of people referred to as Gypsies and, in part because of her misinterpretation of linguistic evidence, she conglomerates the two categories. Matras also argues that scholars such as Hancock, in their desire to promote the political arguments that derive from Gypsies being a group of people descended from India fails to accept that there has been any intermixing between these different groups, (apart from the result of oppressive domestic political measures). The interpretation of evidence about linguistics therefore enters a field in which there are highly contentious debates about what can be understood about Gypsy identity, (including the validity of using the term Gypsy itself).

David Mayall (2004) notes that despite there being a general consensus that there was a diaspora and that groups of people known today as Gypsies came from India, there is a considerable black hole in knowledge of the details about that diasporic movement,

While many texts make reference to Gypsies' Indian or North Indian origins, the details are often left imprecise, and this is despite a shared and concerted attempt to relegate earlier theories about origins and migrancy to the ranks of legends and myths and to replace these with alternative theories based primarily on more sophisticated linguistic and genetic analysis. As will be seen, there is a danger that old myths are being replaced by new ones. (Mayall, 2004: 222-223)

He goes on to argue that much of the linguistic evidence fails to make conclusive links between people thought of as Gypsies today and people of Indian origin; and pointedly notes, that at least one proponent of the link to India, Donald Kenrick, does himself underline the partiality and incompleteness of knowledge about the linguistic roots of the Romany language. Mayall highlights the unlikelihood of new evidence, texts or linguistic analytical tools emerging that might shed further light on linguistic evidence. Such a view would be disputed by scholars such as Marsh (2006) who continue to uncover, analyse and reinterpret historic texts with a view to distinguishing mythological from historical accounts. Much of Marsh's work is situated in close proximity to linguistic work that seeks to situate the emergence of Romany languages more precisely (e.g. Matras, 2002; Hancock, 2006). Mayall also notes that genetic evidence based on recent DNA tracking has yet to provide a conclusive view of Gypsy ethnic links to India. Mayall (2004) is also clearly sceptical of Okely's work for suggesting it over-emphasises the indigenous element in the make-up of British Gypsies, he suggests a significant element of 15th century people who were understood to be Gypsies would have originated as immigrants, (though undoubtedly would have mixed with indigenous itinerant groups).

3.2.5 Who Are The Gypsies? Redux

If there is one point of clarity about understandings of the Gypsy diaspora and the related debates about the Romany language it is that such understandings are loaded with ambiguity. Hancock's promotion of a true ethnic Romany sits comfortably with his politicised engagement in the struggle for Romany rights, in which there is significant political capital to be made out of the link with India. However, when Hancock is quoted as saying, (as he does on The Romani Archives and Documentation Centre website based at the University of Texas and of which he is Director),

Most people don't know that appending the name 'gypsy' to my people is both wrong and pejorative," says Hancock, the official ambassador to the United Nations and UNICEF for the world's 15 million Romanies and the only Romani to have been appointed to the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Council. "'Gypsy' is simply a shortened form of Egyptian—that's what many outsiders thought Romanies were. Using a little 'g' in 'gypsy' also compounds the problem because that indicates that as a common noun it's a lifestyle choice and not that we're an actual ethnic group". (Randall, 2008)

he is plainly failing to acknowledge the large numbers of people who actively describe themselves as 'Gypsies' and who may or may not share a link to the Indian sub-continent and who may or may not believe

there is such a link. Matras (2004) suggests that this failure goes further and in some ways undermines Hancock's scholarship. He argues that the link to a military or warrior caste is mythmaking by Hancock designed to remove the cultural heritage of Gypsies associated with itinerancy and low status commercial endeavours. Matras suggests this approach reinforces the stereotyping of Gypsies by ascribing negative values to many of their day-to-day practices and summoning up an imaginary heritage weighted with positive values. Such ennobling of Gypsy culture fails to reflect everyday lives, and by refusing to acknowledge many Gypsies' low status employment, is counter-productive to his overall message.

It might be suggested that this thesis, which is concerned with families who largely describe themselves as Gypsies and who live on the south coast of England, could usefully ignore the ambiguities associated with diaspora and language. However, this would fail to recognise the impact of such debates upon the lives of Gypsies in the UK, including respondents in this research, many of whom willingly engaged in debate about these issues and also the impact they have. There is also a clear link between such academic accounts and the implementation of policy that impacts upon Gypsies' daily lives. Okely (1997) describes at local government level in particular, there are often attempts to discredit many families by arguing they are not 'true' Gypsies, (that is to say Gypsies with a historic linkage to India); but rather just itinerants who choose to adopt the mantle of being called Gypsies. By doing so local councils have been able to adopt measures such as refusing to grant planning permission on the basis that a Gypsy was not a true Gypsy (see also Taylor, 2008). Bhopal and Myers (2008) show similar processes working within national government and the British media, in which typically distinctions are made between 'Good' and 'Bad' Gypsies: typically by delineating between established English Gypsies and predatory, newly arrived Irish Travellers. If Okely is correct in wishing to engage with Gypsies and how their lives are lived today she is wrong to ignore the cultural baggage and its impact upon people who understand themselves to be Gypsies.

3.3 Terminology and nomenclature

The derivation of the word Gypsy relates to the shortening of the word Egyptian by newly arrived Gypsies in the UK in the sixteenth-century who described themselves as Egyptians (Mayall, 2004; Okely, 1983). Crowe (1994) notes that the practice of Gypsy groups labelling themselves or being mistaken for Egyptians was not exclusive to the UK but something that happened throughout Europe. The word Gypsy therefore does not relate to a true account of ethnicity in the sense that Gypsies are not Egyptians. The term Gypsy has

also been freighted with romanticised imagery typified by George Borrow's mid-nineteenth century semi-autobiographical *Lavengro* and *The Romany Rye* (Borrow, 1982; 1914).

Liégeois and Gheorge (1995) identify within a European context three different terminologies used to describe people who may be described as Gypsies in the UK. Firstly they identify the term 'Gypsy' which is associated with ethnic groups of commercial nomads who originated in the Indian sub-continent. Secondly they mention 'Traveller' which is used to indicate a wider group of people 'whose culture is characterized, *inter-alia*, by self-employment, occupational fluidity, and nomadism'. Although not in itself an ethnic group, Liégeois and Gheorge suggest that Travellers are a group influenced by their common purpose and contact with ethnic groups who originated in India. Finally 'Roma' or 'Rom' are identified as those various ethnic groups who speak Romani language and who describe themselves as Romani people. Within these categories there is a certain flux both in terms of different people feeling they belong to more than one category and also in terms of different people being described by outsiders as belonging to different categories. Clark (2006) notes that in the UK different groups of people may or may not 'fit' within these broader categories. Broadly summarising the different categories of people living in the UK the following groups are identifiable (Clark and Greenfields, 2006; Bhopal, 2004; Taylor, 2008; Okely, 1983);

English Gypsies

English Gypsies would account for the greatest numbers of Gypsies in the UK. Some may speak Anglo-Romanes (Matras, 2004) in addition to English and other languages. They are an ethnic group, (though one inevitably shaped in some part by inter-marriage with non-English Gypsies), whose heritage can be traced back to the fifteenth and sixteenth century migrations to the UK by people who are descended from India.

Welsh Kalé

A small group of Gypsies who speak Romani and live in Wales. Kalé means black in Romani and reflects the dark appearance of this group.

Scottish Travellers or Scottish Gypsies

Nomadic groups in Scotland who speak '*Cant*', a language that derives both from local regional vocabularies and also from Anglo-Romanes.

Irish Travellers

Unlike the previous groups there is no link between this nomadic, ethnic group from Ireland and the Indian sub-continent. They speak a separate language 'Gammon' or 'Shelta' in addition to English and other languages. Their lifestyle does however, has much in common with different Gypsy groups on mainland Britain.

Fairground and Travelling Showpeople

Seasonally highly nomadic people who move from town to town, often on well-established circuits, to work at different fairs. They often have a winter base. They are not descended from an ethnic group with links to India.

New Age Travellers

A more recent phenomenon of groups of people who have opted out from society and chosen to lead more nomadic lifestyles.

In addition to such identifiable groups in the UK there is also a plethora of different terminology used to identify different groups. In some cases this terminology seeks to identify an individual and in such cases it is perhaps more apparent whether or not the term is accurate; it would for example be palpably wrong to describe a New Age Traveller in any terms that suggested a link to an ethnic group descended from India, (unless of course they were both Indian and a New Age Traveller). More troublesome is the need for a generic terminology, that is for a term which might acceptably include different types of people. In official documents such as the Pupil Level Annual School Census (PLASC) the terms 'Gypsy, Roma and Traveller' and 'Travellers of Irish Heritage' have been used since 2004 (DCSF, 2008). Okely (1983) suggests the term 'Traveller-Gypsies' but in later work reverts to 'Gypsies' (Okely, 1997). Bhopal (2004) amongst others favours 'Gypsy Travellers' and in her description of the problems associated with terms, suggests the need for terminology to encompass both the nomadic or semi-nomadic element of individual's lives with an element of ethnic identification.

In my research I interviewed mostly English Gypsies, who defined themselves as either 'Gypsies' or 'Travellers' or a combination of both and occasionally described themselves as Romany; I also interviewed Irish Travellers who described themselves as Travellers; and finally one interview was conducted with a

Travelling Showman family and they described themselves as Travelling Showmen. For the purposes of this research I have used the individual ascriptions given to identify individual's backgrounds.

Finding a terminology to describe more generic ideas that relate to different respondents and also to a wider body of knowledge in which different people are identified is a more complex issue than identifying individual descriptors. It is a problem that is underlined by respondents in the research who often very clearly stated their difference from other groups of people regarded as Gypsies or Travellers. A common solution adopted within many official documents or by government organisations has been to use the term 'Gypsy, Roma and Traveller', generally abbreviated to 'GRT'. 'GRT' has been regarded as a useful generic term to encompass work that looks at similar, though different people and particularly within policy and academic work has been regarded as a means of acknowledging and recognising difference. 'GRT' in this sense has a very useful record of demonstrating a governmental awareness of differences between for example long-standing, indigenous, ethnic groups in the UK, newer European immigrants (Roma) and New Age Travellers. It is less useful for this thesis, which concentrates on groups who have a substantial history of living in the UK; there are no interviews for example with recent European immigrants and none of my respondents referred to themselves as Roma, (though some acknowledged wider international connections including ethnic associations with other European groups). No respondents used the term GRT to describe themselves or anybody else. Personally I am also uncomfortable using 'Gypsy and Traveller' or similar combinations; in my own previous work (Bhopal and Myers, 2009) many respondents made clear they did not want to be described as Travellers because they no longer travelled. For all its failings the generic term 'Gypsy' or 'Gypsies' is used in the thesis, partly because it is the term used by most of my respondents but also because it reflects a construction that for all its misplaced connection to Egypt, has become embedded historically as a term that is understood to embrace certain types of people. It remains a dangerously potent label because of the abusive connotations some non-Gypsies would attach to it. The term 'Gypsy' also has a potency that derives from the romanticised accounts suggested in Borrow's work which continues today; for example in Phillip Pullman's children's fiction where an itinerant bargee population are named 'Gyptians' (Pullman, 1995). However, my use of the terms 'Gypsy' and 'Gypsies' in this work is intended to be distinct from either abusive or romanticised accounts. It is used as a generic term to encompass ethnic groups of people who also used the term to define themselves.

The other term used within this work to account for ethnic difference is *gaujo*, which is the Romany word for non-Gypsy. This is used occasionally within the research to indicate a particular sense of respondents'

understandings of the non-Gypsy world, that is to say it is not used more generally simply to describe non-Gypsy culture.

3.4 Gypsies in the UK

3.4.1 Family

The family is an important structure in Gypsy communities, though as Greenfields notes family structures often vary widely between different groups of Gypsies and between and within families reflecting individual experience (Clark and Greenfields, 2006). Acton (1974) notes that families often remain closely linked through patterns of marriage though this is partially disputed by Okely (1983), who suggests families develop links by deliberately promoting connections between discrete families in order to strengthen political and cultural standing. However, Okely goes on to note how when links are made between families these will often be multiple links, (e.g. several brothers marrying several sisters), and this could be viewed as a reframing of Acton's original description in a slightly different manner.

3.4.2 Family Gender Roles

Within the family there are very traditional gender roles. Women retain responsibility for domestic duties including childcare, cooking and cleaning, caring for elderly relatives and teaching similar skills to their daughters (Spencer, 2003; Greenfields, 2006; Levinson and Sparkes, 2006; Cemlyn *et al.*, 2009). There have also been consistent accounts of Gypsy women moving away from these roles because of changing economic needs since the early 1970s (see Acton, 1974; Levinson and Sparkes, 2006) and Acton in particular has noted how women have moved into more active political and representative roles. Work that has focused on education has also consistently suggested that changing economic conditions have changed expectations for girls; they are increasingly encouraged to continue with their schooling in order to acquire skills and qualifications necessary for obtaining jobs (Kiddle, 1999; Bhopal, 2004). Okely (1983, 1997, 2005) has also consistently given accounts in her research that highlight roles adopted by Gypsy women that either subvert or actively challenge their perceived subservient role.

Men meanwhile are expected to demonstrate the roles of being head of the family with responsibility for generating income and passing on skills to their sons (Okely, 1983; Greenfields, 2006; Levinson and Sparkes, 2003) and are often judged by their ability within masculine fields, (e.g. Fighting or negotiating a deal).

3.4.3 Education

The education of Gypsy children is a topic that has probably attracted more interest by non-Gypsies than any other specific issue for a number of reasons. Since publication of the Plowden Report in 1967 there has been an acute awareness within educationalist circles, both government and academic, that compared to all other ethnic groups, Gypsy children have low levels of attendance and achievement; and, that this directly relates to problems associated with schooling designed around the needs of a sedentary population. The 2009 DCSF Research Report (Wilkin et al, 2009) highlights the repetition of such findings across a wide spectrum of Government funded and other research, (see Plowden, 1967; Swann, 1985; DfEE, 1999; Bhopal et al 2000; DfES, 2003; DfES, 2005; DfES 2006; Bhopal and Myers, 2006).

Despite such on-going concerns there has been an extraordinary increase in school attendance by Gypsy children since the late 1960's (Myers and Bhopal, 2009). Statistics for attendance are often inaccurate because of fears many Gypsy families have about revealing their ethnic identity to schools (DCSF, 2008). In the 1960's only about 4% of Gypsy children attended school, today the figure is between 70-80% (Acton, 2004, Myers and Bhopal, 2009).

Most academic work that has looked at education has tended to be descriptive and produced material that has a direct practical value to either education practitioners or policy makers e.g. Bhopal (2004), Derrington & Kendall (2004), Bhopal & Myers (2009a, 2009b). Acton (2004) highlights the longstanding interest in education by Gypsies and the failures of non-Gypsies and schools to acknowledge such interest. The school as a space in which there is an engagement between Gypsies and non-Gypsies is examined further by Myers and Bhopal (2009), particularly in terms of safety and notions of community. Myers and Bhopal identify how longstanding spatial attachments to a local school and a local authority site in a large metropolitan area were associated with unexpected degrees of identification between English Gypsies and their white working class neighbours; particularly in shared racist assumptions about newer, non-white immigrants moving into

the school. Myers *et al* (2010) also uses the intersections between Gypsy and non-Gypsy communities, that sometimes appear more visible around schools, as a starting point for understanding issues of safety. In particular highlighting fears of the transition from the relative safety of smaller primary schooling to secondary schools. Such fears are often rooted within Gypsy expectations about their own children's transition to adulthood in (school) spaces in which non-Gypsy children demonstrate immoral behaviours, (drink and drug taking or early sexual contacts for example). Myers *et al* suggest something akin to Goffman's *umwelt* (Goffman, 1971, Young, 1999), a protective moveable cocoon that delineates spaces of anxiety and trust (Giddens, 1991), is at play within Gypsy parental concerns for their children,

In many ways Gypsy and Traveller parents are attempting to create (and protect) 'a closed protective environment' for the protection of their children and young people. This moving bubble of protection is as much about the protection and maintenance of traditions and lifestyles as it is about protecting their young people from what they see as the negative influence of drugs, alcohol, permissive sexuality and racist bullying. (Myers *et al.*, 2010:22)

The school remains a singular and insightful space in which daily relations between Gypsy and non-Gypsy families can be observed. A further discussion of education and its relationship to citizenship follows in Chapter 6.

3.4.4 Accommodation

Greenfields (2006) describes a 'discrete coexistence' that existed between non-Gypsies and Gypsies who travelled on known circuits to generate income up until and just after the Second World War; essentially Gypsies non-sedentarism was tolerated because of needs for seasonal employment (e.g. harvesting) and after the war for reconstruction work. However, Mayall (1995) and Taylor (2008) both note the excessive and frequent legislation passed that made a nomadic lifestyle difficult. The 1950's and 1960's saw increasing legislation prohibiting the use of temporary and traditional stopping places for Gypsies associated with increasing pressure on land use (Greenfields, 2006). A growing awareness of the shortage of accommodation for Gypsies finally resulted in the 1968 Caravan Sites Act, which although in principle designed to increase the number of permanent pitches, was implemented locally in such a way as to reduce the overall number of official pitches available to Gypsy families, (this is discussed in greater detail in Chapter 7 Citizenship). Since that time the shortage of pitches available for Gypsies has remained problematic, not least because of the failure of local councils to agree planning permission for new Gypsy sites on privately owned land

(Greenfields, 2006; Cemlyn *et al*, 2009). The 2009 Equalities and Human Rights Commission report suggested that 1 in 4 Gypsies living in caravans currently does not have a permanent place to stop and argues that problems associated with accommodation are the root cause of most of the inequalities faced in Gypsy lives (Cemlyn *et al*, 2009).

There is widespread evidence and documentary accounts of the poor conditions of many local authority owned sites, including the tendency for them to be positioned in inaccessible and/or unpleasant locations, (this is discussed in the following Space and Distance section of this chapter, see 3.5). Whilst almost all the literature which discusses the conditions of local authority Gypsy sites has concluded that conditions on sites are often very poor, a 2006 project funded by the Department for Work and Pensions (Wagstaff, 2006) concluded that,

The majority of Gypsy sites visited for this research were in a reasonable condition, although nationally there are some very poor sites. (2006:36)

The same report also suggested (attributing these figures to the 'University of Birmingham'), 'that over £13,000 per site, per year needs to be spent over the next 30 years to improve and maintain the quality of sites'. It argued that inconsistencies in the amount of rent local authorities could recover from tenants on housing benefit, (quoted by the report's authors to be a considerable majority of those on local authority sites), meant that many local authorities were unable to spend as much as was necessary on the maintenance of sites. The report also indicated that Gypsy sites were 'considered' by local authority landlords, 'to be a management intensive task due to the high incidence of disputes, vandalism and illiteracy on sites' (Wagstaff, 2006:2).

Many Gypsy families also live in traditional brick and mortar housing. In the past there has been a suggestion that this reflected attempts at assimilation by local councils (see Smith, 2004) but it also represents choices made by Gypsies about what might constitute the best interests for their families. Smith and Greenfields (2012) discuss how some elements of Gypsy lifestyles adapted well to a move into urban housing,

many Gypsies who settled in cities successfully adapted the traditional economic characteristics of family-based self-employment – low overheads, organisational flexibility and a multitude of occupations – to an urban context by moving into areas such as scrap dealing, market trading, car dealing and construction. Nevertheless, in terms of economic status and employment opportunities, our findings suggest that a polarisation of these communities is occurring, with many experiencing high rates of long-term unemployment, poverty and multiple forms of disadvantage. (2012: 52)

For some families who do not make a successful transition to a housed lifestyle this possibly represents the final consequence of the 1968 Caravan Act. Conducting research for the Department of Work and Pensions that examined inconsistencies in rents received by local authorities and private landlords of sites in relation to housing benefits Wagstaff (2006) noted,

Benefit dependency is high. The research estimates that at least three-quarters of tenants were on housing benefit on 90 per cent of sites. Just over one-fifth of local authorities stated that all of their tenants were on benefit. (2006:3)

suggesting that poverty is a widespread problem for many Gypsies living in many different circumstances.

3.4.5 Health

There is evidence to suggest that Gypsies suffer from serious health issues. Reporting on health inequalities between Gypsies and non-Gypsies, A University of Sheffield project concluded,

that Gypsy Travellers have significantly poorer health status and significantly more self-reported symptoms of ill-health than other UK-resident, English speaking ethnic minorities and economically disadvantaged white UK residents.

and noted that,

Gypsy Travellers have poorer health than that of their age sex matched comparators. Self reported chest pain, respiratory problems, and arthritis were also more prevalent in the Traveller group. For Gypsy Travellers, living in a house is associated with long term illness, poorer health state and anxiety. Those who rarely travel have the poorest health. (Parry *et al*, 2004:6)

Prematurely early death rates for Irish Travellers have also been noted (Barry *et al*, 1987; Commission for Racial Equality, 2004) and there is circumstantial, though compelling evidence that the same holds true for Britain (Cemlyn *et al*, 2009). Whilst some of these problems are attributable to lifestyles a number of commentators have described the difficulties of obtaining primary healthcare from the NHS, including the refusal of treatment to Gypsies by local GP surgeries (Feder, 1989; Save the Children (Scotland), 1996; Clark and Greenfields, 2006).

3.4.6 Media Accounts of Gypsies

Morris (2000) argues that journalists covering stories about Gypsies regularly fail to abide either by the standards of the National Union of Journalists Code of Conduct (NUJ, 2009) or by the Press Complaints

Commission's Code of Practice (now *Editor's Code of Practice*, PCC 2010), both of which stipulate in some detail that journalists should not produce racist or discriminatory material on the basis of the ethnicity of their subjects. She details how the British press portray Gypsies as deviant 'others' often in very stereotypical terms that stress a binary in which Gypsy qualities are portrayed as the opposite of non-Gypsy norms. The virulence and racism of press accounts about Gypsies was highlighted by the Council of Europe's Human Rights Commissioner, Alvaro Gil-Robles in both Britain (2005) and throughout Europe (2006). Following his 2004 visit to the United Kingdom he reported that,

to judge by the levels of invective that can regularly be read in the national press, Gypsies would appear to be the last ethnic minority in respect of which openly racist views can still be acceptably expressed. I was truly amazed by some of the headlines, articles and editorials that were shown to me. Such reporting would appear to be symptomatic of a widespread and seemingly growing distrust of Gypsies resulting in their discrimination in a broad range of areas. (Gil-Robles 2005:43)

Ironically Gil-Robles visit to the UK preceded an escalation of interest by the British press in Gypsies that materialised the following year in the politically charged atmosphere of a general election. At this time *The Sun* newspaper ran a campaign for several weeks under the headline '*Stamp On The Camps*' (*The Sun*, 10 March 2005), this suggested Gypsies lived in squalor, were noisy and dangerous neighbours and were illegally manipulating the planning system (see Myers 2007). *The Sun's* campaign became heavily entwined with the rhetoric of Michael Howard, then leader of the Conservative party, whose '*I Believe in Fair Play*' speech on the 20 March 2005 suggested Gypsies were unfairly manipulating the planning system to the detriment of the non-Gypsy population. Howard's intervention led to a further escalation in press coverage, some of it more overtly sympathetic such as *The Independent's* (21 March 2005) lead story entitled *Are These Britain's Most Demonised People?* Most other newspapers however, followed a similar line to *The Sun*, (e.g. *The Daily Mail's Traveller's Tales: A Dossier of Despair* also from the 21 March).

Morris (2000) suggests that the deviance associated with Gypsies can in some respects be understood in terms of moral panics. Referring to Cohen (1973) she notes how these are often understood by the wider population from a second-hand perspective, that is through the intermediary of journalism. Similarly Okely notes that Gypsy lives are often cast in terms of how they are seen by non-Gypsies,

Travellers' existence is affected by the way Gorgios represent them. Travellers cannot escape the gaze of the Gorgio (Okely, 1983:232).

Kitzinger (2000) describes the tendency of the media to try and find similarities between news stories that focus upon moral panics or scandals, using the example of social services making accusations about child abuse in small communities in Cleveland in 1987, that were later recycled by the media as the means to understand similar (though different) events in the Orkneys in 1991. She goes on to suggest that, this reflects the public's own contextualisation of such events, accepting a degree of 'osmosis' between different events; information regarding the later event becomes confused with the publicly accepted account of the original event. So,

phrases such as 'another Vietnam', 'another Chernobyl', or 'another Hitler' sum up a particular set of fears, so the phrase 'another Cleveland' provokes a set of powerful pre-packaged associations. (Kitzinger, 2000: 70).

The impact of both the media accounts and the public engagement with such accounts is that alternative, (and possibly less sensationalist but more accurate), understandings are lost. The media portrayal of such accounts,

is not a simple reflection of reality, it reflects complex issues about the politics of categorization, identification, source strategies and media representation. It is also inextricably intertwined with the operation of social power, class politics and the metaphorical and social status (2000:74)

of the players involved in these events. According to Kitzinger such events become 'media templates', which can be used as dramatic shorthand to quantify and qualify the meaning and significance of newsworthy events. Kitzinger distinguishes 'media templates' from similar iconic moments, such as the video footage of Rodney King being beaten by American policemen, which become a 'stand alone emblematic decisive moment' (Bennett and Lawrence, 1995:20). The 'media template' is effectively an on-going explanation used to encompass understandings of persistent social ills, unlike the iconic event whose meaning itself may be challenged, (e.g. different accounts of Rodney King would suggest he did or did not deserve his beating). The template itself is rarely challenged unless in the sense of challenging its relevance to a particular contemporary event. Kitzinger suggests the 'media template' plays a much more insidious role than the iconic event, because it simplifies and distorts a series of events, and amalgamates within them an easily understandable pattern of what constitutes a particular social problem. Whilst the use of analogies obviously has useful and pertinent roles in shaping both media and public understandings of events, the templating of accounts can work to sediment understandings about particular events or particular groups without ever allowing them to be publicly challenged. Bhopal & Myers (2008) suggest that newspaper stories contribute to an historical account of Gypsies in which stereotypes have remained unquestioned over

very long periods of time, (unlike perceptions of other ethnic groups which have often radically changed within shorter timescales).

It is also worth noting that the recurring imagery of events associated with particular locales is not restricted to media accounts, Hall *et al* (1978) discussing the legacy of racially understood violence notes that,

The specification of certain venues reactivates earlier and subsequent associations: Brixton and Clapham. (1978: 329)

Keith develops this further describing,

genealogies of city writing dating back to the cities of the industrial revolution that linked the fear of urban growth with the birth of the academic discipline of sociology through the growth the discovery of the social in the Victorian explorations of the darkest metropolis (2009: 541)

Accounts of Gypsies often reiterate stereotypes and recurrent fears, using them as easily understood shorthand that prompts and restates engrained spatial understandings and fears about Gypsies.

3.5 Space and distance

This section considers the marginalised spaces occupied by Gypsies both in terms of their production as spaces of 'otherness', but also thinking about how such marginal spaces may be used in a very productive fashion by considering the notion of 'porosity' (Benjamin and Laci, 1924). It argues that despite the very negative connotations that can be understood through Wacquant's (2008) work about the ghettoisation of certain groups, particularly Gypsies, within marginal and difficult spaces, these spaces can also be used advantageously to reinterpret identity.

3.5.1 Relationship between human behaviour and space

Simmel examines the relationship between human activity and space, notably when discussing the city (Simmel, 1903a) but also in a more wide-reaching sense (1903b, 1909) that acknowledges the relationship between space and human activity at all times. Space, understood in terms of the physical characteristics of a place or in terms of a more symbolic structure, (the nation or the city for example), clearly has an affect upon those living there. In addition, and highlighting that the *relationship* between inhabitants and the space

they occupy, Simmel describes the effects of human actions on their environment. Lechner (1991) notes that while Simmel,

shows how space is in some ways socially formed, he does not treat space as simply a social construct. It retains a reality of its own. Simmel's overall position, then, lies somewhere between spatial determinism and social constructionism. (1991:196)

Simmel explores how human actions affect how space is understood in his *Bridge and Door* essay (Simmel, 1909) that starts from the premise of a unified state of nature that is both separated and connected by human behaviour. This 'binding and unbinding' can be understood on many different levels,

In the immediate as well as the symbolic sense, in the physical as well as the intellectual sense, we are at any moment those who separate the connected or connect the separate. (Simmel, 1909:171)

Simmel uses tropes such as roads, bridges, doors and windows to examine the social connections between humans including the physical materialisations of such connections. He underlines the inter-relationship between being connected and being separated and in doing so hints at the inevitability that groups who are othered within society will experience such othering in spatial terms. Wacquant (2008) outlines a similar process when he points out that it is not simply poverty that determines why certain groups live in places that are,

publicly recognised as a 'dumping ground' for poor people, downwardly mobile working-class households, and dishonoured categories. Poverty is too often equated with insufficient income or sheer material dispossession. But, aside from being deprived of adequate conditions and means of living, to be poor in a rich society also entails, to varying degree, being assigned to the status of a *social anomaly* and being deprived of control over one's collective representation and identity. (2008:168)

The relationship between space and human activity might therefore be regarded as a reflection of the processes at play in the construction of both collective identity and the understandings of collective identity.

Watson (2006, 2008) also discusses the affect of human behaviours on public spaces and noting the potential of 'marginal spaces' in which public and private worlds collide argues for the,

preservation of informal, hidden, marginal, secret, serendipitous spaces which are not clearly delineated with formal boundaries. Such spaces are crucial to sociality and intercultural connections and mixing in the city. (Watson, 2008: 33)

In particular describing the street fabric of a market in North London Watson emphasises how a mixture of pedestrianised streets, a confluence of different migratory people and a minimum of regulatory influence from local government work well to create a social space in which the occupants exercise a significant say in how the space should work towards meeting their needs. Watson and Studdert (2006) note how markets provide a very useful social function of allowing people to 'bump' into each other. This seems to reflect an aspect of markets (perhaps to a greater extent than shopping generally), in which there is a collision between public and private worlds, between commerce and pleasure. In addition to which the people being 'bumped' into are a diverse mix of friends, family, acquaintances and strangers.

3.5.2 Walter Benjamin and Porosity

Walter Benjamin and Asja Lacis (Benjamin & Lacis 1924), present a very sympathetic account of social life in Naples, which is described as a ramshackle city distinguished by poverty and criminality. They discuss the *porosity* of the city spaces relating the types of city spaces to the lifestyles of its inhabitants. Being porous suggests a changeable and malleable world, one that remains unfinished. The word 'interpenetrate' is used on several occasions throughout the essay; sometimes to describe how different buildings have different functions, or how public and private worlds merge, or how commerce and leisure become fused together. Discussing the architecture of the city they note how,

Building and action interpenetrate in the courtyards, arcades, and stairways. In everything they preserve the scope to become a theatre of new, unforeseen constellations. The stamp of the definitive is avoided. (1924:169)

Architecture is described as 'the most binding part of the communal rhythm' (1924:169), apart from very specific circumstances, (such as a great hotel), the city is shaped by an anarchic mix of the local in which the lives and passions of the people living in the city produce its structure. The spaces of the city are in constant flux, as city dwellers improvise and shape the city to meet their needs,

So everything joyful is mobile: music, toys, ice cream circulate through the streets. (1924:171)

They also describe the lives of the city dwellers as being porous; they are in a similar state of flux and subject to change.

Similarly dispersed, porous and commingled is private life. What distinguishes Naples from other large cities is something it has in common with the African kraal: each private attitude or act is permeated by streams of communal life. To exist, for the Northern European the most private of affairs, is here, as in the kraal, a collective matter. (1924:174)

Describing the consequences for large families faced by the sudden death of a parent Benjamin and Lacis, (over romantically perhaps), suggests the porosity and fluidity of the city is an effective response. Rather than children having to be cared for by distant relatives, neighbours assume a communal responsibility for the orphans,

A neighbour takes a child to her table for a shorter or longer period, and thus families interpenetrate in relationships that can resemble adoption. (1924:176)

There are obvious physical discrepancies between Benjamin and Lacis's description of an entire city and the spaces occupied by Gypsies but there are also some interesting parallels. Okely (1983) for example describes the different approaches taken to site layouts by local authority planners and Gypsy residents. Whilst officially sanctioned sites tend to privilege the creation of orderly individual private spaces, effectively isolating one caravan pitch from another; the preference for many Gypsies is to create a single communal space in which the lives of families are openly on display,

Every trailer and its occupants can be seen by everyone else....there is no need for privacy and protection from Gypsy neighbours. Few draw curtains, even at night. Within this circle of solidarity there can be no secrets – domestic quarrels are for all to see, the centre is a place for chatting, and a safe enclave for children to play. (Okely, 1983:88)

Okely highlights the importance of the difference in approach to the management of space by Gypsies and non-Gypsies by suggesting the lines of orderly, private caravan pitches, 'designed by Gorgio architects and officials also reveals a contradiction between the ideology of the dominant society and the travelling Gypsies' (Okely 1983:88). The interpenetration of different spheres of life described by Benjamin seems very relevant to Gypsy lifestyles and this aspect of porosity, both spatially and beyond the spatial, seems an appropriate starting point for understanding how social life shapes the spaces occupied by Gypsies.

Benjamin and Lacis were obviously outsiders, tourists even, when they visited Naples and this perhaps signals the need to be wary of this account of a romanticised Neapolitan lifestyle. Their description of the vibrancy and engagement with communal life, described most straight-forwardly when discussing Neapolitan cafes where,

‘Life is unable to sit down and stagnate in them’ (1924:176).

seems to hint at the germ of a truth about community as a successful strategy for marginalised people. The vision of a local, neighbourhood community binding together through the spaces it occupies in Naples, although possibly an exaggerated and romanticised account, is still a very attractive materialisation of community. Possibly Benjamin and Lacis’s vision of communal living in Naples reflects something of the romanticised late-nineteenth/early twentieth century accounts, that counter the forward march of modernity by portraying an idyllic, back to nature account of Gypsies (Sibley 1995, 2003). The same thinking filters through to the present day in the expectations of what Gypsy lives should be like according to many media accounts (Myers 2007). These tend to suggest a time in the past when Gypsies were at one with rural communities, engaged in seasonal crop picking and travelling peacefully around the byways of Britain in horse-drawn wagons. Often such accounts suggest a yearning and nostalgia for ideas of community typified by Bauman as a *paradise lost* (Bauman 2001).

What remains interesting is how the occupation of space can be a successful strategy in the adaptation and promotion of a successful community. The spaces of local authority managed and privately owned Gypsy sites are a very specific set of circumstances generally only occupied by Gypsies. In a wider sense Gypsies may be thought of as being deprived of a homeland and this non-territoriality and its relationship to the ‘otherness’ of Gypsies is discussed in the following section.

3.6 Otherness

3.6.1 The non-territorial nation

For writers such as Acton and Hancock, within both their academic work and their personal involvement in Gypsy political struggles, individual Gypsy lives are understood within the context of a transnational Gypsy population, one that is in the process of organising politically. Acton was involved in discussions in the 1970s about the possibility of creating *Romanestan*; a state like Israel designed to provide a physical territory for a non-territorial nation (Okely, 1997b). Whilst most parties concluded *Romanestan* was not a useful way forward, Acton’s work and that of other commentators associated with him such as Grattan Puxon and Donald Kenrick, work within a context in which *Romanestan* represents the imagined,

international community of Gypsies. This was articulated in the reports of the First World Romani Congress in 1971 as 'our state is everywhere where there are Roma because Romanestan is in our hearts', (Marushiakova and Popov 2004: 78).

This construction of the *idea* of Romanestan has parallels and simultaneous disjunctures with Anderson's (1983) description of imagined communities. Like Anderson's nation state *Romanestan* works to bind disparate groups of people together who do not personally know one another. Writers such as Hancock (2002, 2010a) have also built much out of a shared language and a shared history that is at one and the same time both very modern and also welded to the past. One element of Anderson's argument that does not hold true in the Gypsy example is the significance of printed text in the development of national identity,

new imagined communities....conjured up by lexicography and print-capitalism always regarded themselves as somehow ancient. In an age in which 'history' itself was still widely conceived in terms of 'great events' and 'great leaders', pearls strung along a narrative, it was obviously tempting to decipher the community's past in antique dynasties. (Anderson 1983: 109)

However, the most obvious difference between the imaginary *Romanestan* and Anderson's imagined communities is that it is not constrained physically, in other words there are no geographical borders. For Anderson,

The nation is imagined as *limited* because even the largest of them, encompassing perhaps a billion living human beings, has finite, if elastic, boundaries, beyond which lie other nations. No nation imagines itself coterminous with mankind. (Anderson 1983:7)

Romanestan, in its imagined context has the potential to map its inhabitants out across all five continents. Having retreated from a desire to create an actual state, what is left in the idea of *Romanestan* is if anything a far more ambitious project; its elasticity shaped in 'our hearts' rather than on a political map.

The notion of an imagined, international community is flawed because although it recognises the 'otherness' associated with Gypsy communities, it does so from a narrow point of view that privileges political ambitions to recognise Gypsy communities as an international force. The perception of an imaginary *Romanestan* works well in encouraging a sense of political solidarity, but fails to recognise how the 'otherness' of Gypsies is shaped by non-Gypsy society and by Gypsy communities who are not engaged in an international political struggle, (this group would include the majority of my respondents). It creates distance between Gypsy communities and society but in a way that fails to address the tangible management

of distance that exists already between these different communities. There is a sense in which the political struggle is almost aspirational in its desire to bind together the different 'othernesses' of Gypsy lives.

Okely (1997) goes much further in her criticism of *Romanestan*, in either a real or imaginary sense, suggesting it represented the desires of 'gorgio' activists rather than Gypsies;

Given the relative silence on the subject among the mass of Gypsies, this was in fact the ethnocentric imposition of a sedentarist model upon a traditionally nomadic people. (Okely, 1997:230)

More recently Rövid (2011) has explored the 'anthropological, political and moral grounds' on which Gypsies can be considered a non-territorial nation and concluded that the sole reason for pursuing such an approach is for strategic political ends.

3.6.2 Understanding and articulating 'otherness'

'Otherness' is understandable in different ways. Most strikingly in the polarity between understandings of the otherness of others as opposed to those others own understanding of their 'otherness'. Discussing the positioning of Jews within Renaissance Venice, Sennett (1994) describes how Jewish bodies were associated with impurity in ways that echo representations of Gypsies as on the one hand dirty and yet on the other as romantic or exotic,

the impurity of the alien body was associated with sensuality, with the lure of the Oriental, a body cut free from Christian constraints. The touch of the Jew defiles, yet seduces. (1994:216)

Venetians at this time were faced by a crisis in their international standing and domestic prosperity, attributed characteristics of 'otherness' to Jews living in their midst. They were castigated as carriers of disease and impurity by Venetians who sought to segregate their own lives from those of Jews. This segregation took the form of ritual behaviours such as bowing rather than shaking hands on a deal, and in its most extreme manifestation, the building of a Jewish ghetto. Using Mary Douglas's (2002) work, Sennett goes on to suggest that Venetians displaced their own self-loathing, (one that arose from conjoining worries about their economic outlook with fears that the city state was undergoing a period of sensual decline), onto Jews. This displacement 'also had a class character' (1994:227) that linked the aristocracy and the idle rich,

two groups of people popularly regarded as squandering wealth and time on debased, sensual lifestyles and those at the bottom, the Jews. The desire for Christian purity, for a life lived in imitation of Christ was seen to be under threat because of the immoral lifestyles of rich Venetians; and, some of the frustrations felt about their behaviour, was used to form an understanding of the 'otherness' of Jews. The Venetian Christians protected themselves by creating a physical boundary, the Ghetto, around this 'otherness' in order to confine it. Meanwhile, the Jews in Venice constructed a different understanding around their 'otherness', responding in many ways by creating a strong and resilient sense of community.

In the 'age of the Ghetto' (1994:244) spatial isolation became part of Jewish identity, emphasising difference and the desire to remain different. By doing so it 'welded an oppressed community together' (1994:244). The Ghetto was useful not just because it provided protection for Jews, but because it created a space in which to build synagogues and exhibit wealth. This was a space in which Jews could act independently and in ways that would have provoked the Venetian Christians. Mayall (2004) notes how the persecution of Gypsies by non-Gypsies has had similar consequences to the othering of Venetian Jews, both in terms of the way they are perceived as others,

Persecution, whether experienced or learnt as part of group history, helps to establish Gypsy ethnicity by consolidating a sense of group identity and by establishing ethnic credentials in the eyes of the non-Gypsy population. (Mayall, 2004: 235)

and also by strengthening and bringing Gypsy communities together,

Discriminatory treatment by outsiders strengthens group identity by creating a defensive response to such hostility. (2004:235)

Much like Sennett's Venetians and Jews, Gypsies both in the UK and internationally have been distanced from the dominant population. This distancing materialises both as a cultural understanding of difference or 'otherness', and also specifically materialises in terms of the creation of space between each group. A degree of separation is maintained between Gypsies and non-Gypsies in the UK both in terms of recognition of different cultures and also in terms of the spaces occupied by different groups.

3.6.3 Gypsies, Non-Gypsies and Whiteness

The seemingly deliberate policy of locating Gypsy communities in marginal spaces reflects the cultural distance that exists between Gypsy communities and other groups, including other groups who are also at the bottom of the social register. Hartigan's (1997) work on whiteness, in particular around the name-calling and boundary formation associated with 'white trash' in America, is useful because it analyses some of the mechanics by which groups at the bottom of the social register differentiate themselves. The residents of Hartigan's (1997) ethnographic research in downwardly mobile, formerly respectable white working class areas of Detroit, typified the decay of their neighbourhoods less by incoming black families than by incoming 'white trash'. These white 'others' disrupted residents', 'implicit understandings of what it means to be white' (Hartigan, 1997:46), they resort to name-calling in order to displace one contingent of white culture, hence 'white trash' as a stigmatising insult,

constitutes more than a derogatory exchange of name calling; it materializes a complicated policing of the inchoate boundaries that comprise class and racial identities (Hartigan, 1997:47)

Despite some linkages between Gypsies and the stereotypical figure of the white underclass labelled 'chavs' in 2003 and 2004, (see Wallace and Spanner 2004 and the *chavscum* and *chavtown* websites), there is little evidence of identification between the white underclasses and Gypsy communities. Where evidence of such identification has been documented (Myers and Bhopal, 2009) it has tended to reflect a shared sense of belonging to a wider locality in which Gypsies and non-Gypsies still maintained separate lives, lived within separate spaces and with separate cultural values. The identification has also tended to reflect a shared dislike of other, newer incomer groups, generally other, non-white minority ethnic groups.

Even in places where there is a shared sense of belonging and resistance, name-calling such as 'pikey' or 'dirty gyppo' by the white, underclass neighbours of Gypsies remains endemic and reflects the degree of cultural separation understood to exist between different groups (Bhopal and Myers, 2008). Such name-calling demarcates boundaries in which the status of Gypsies is firmly placed below that of other white underclasses. It is worth noting that the term '*gaujo*' used by Gypsies to describe non-Gypsies means 'non-Gypsy', can be applied to non-Gypsies of any class, (or indeed to any aspect of non-Gypsy life). Whilst *gaujo* is not a term of endearment it is also does not carry the derogatory connotations of 'pikey' or 'gyppo'. Gidley et al (2008) uniquely identified groups of white working class youth, in a London satellite new town who aspired to Gypsy status, (respondents apparently described them as 'wannabe-pikeys' and used this

term in a positive fashion). All other research highlights that any use of the term 'pikey' is considered demeaning and offensive by Gypsy respondents and that far from aspiring to be Gypsies, other non-Gypsies tend to regard Gypsies in highly racist terms (Cemlyn et al, 2009)

Such a cultural separation can be understood in terms of Simmel (1971) and Bauman's (1989, 1991, 1997) work on the 'stranger'. Clark has even suggested Gypsies are 'in many ways, the perfect 'stranger'' (2006:27). That the strangeness of Gypsies should remain a constant factor in their lives for such a prolonged period of time is discussed in greater detail in the following section (3.6.4 *Gypsies and Strangers*). In many ways it is this consistency that differentiates the relationship between Gypsies and British society from the relationship of other ethnic groups to British society (Bhopal and Myers 2008). To date there is no work that considers the effects of class on relationships between Gypsies and non-Gypsies; however, a consideration of the ambiguity associated in Simmel's representation of a 'stranger' who is at one and the same time near and distant, would suggest that such ambiguity is more pronounced within communities who live closer to Gypsies. The tendency for Gypsies to be sited on marginal land suggests they live in closer proximity to other poorer/underclass communities who will consequently regard them with a great deal of ambiguity.

The distance that is created by non-Gypsies occurs at all levels of society and in all aspects of their engagement with Gypsy communities. Mayall notes,

The processes of categorisation, labelling and representation are at the very heart of majority-minority relations, both shaping and being shaped by popular responses as well as official or state attitudes and policies. (2004:18)

Mayall's (2004) *Gypsy Identities 1500-2000: from Egipcians and Moon-Men to the ethnic Romany* is an exhaustive account of the historical representations made about Gypsies in the UK. Mayall is particularly good at describing the state's legislative response towards Gypsies and nomadism (see also Mayall 1995), and how as a group they are outcast within society and boundaries created around them. James (2007) confirms how the policing of mobile communities of Gypsies uses behaviours such as surveillance and enforcement, to harass and unsettle populations who do not conform to sedentarism. Mayall also notes how the persecution associated with the creation of these boundaries strengthens the group identity of Gypsies. By taking a detailed historical approach to the construction of Gypsy identity Mayall's work is useful at defining and evidencing 500 years of persecution and boundary formation. If there is a criticism to be made about Mayall it is his emphasis on boundary formation as a result of state legislation towards nomadism

which seems to underpin much of his argument. As discussed earlier Okely (1983) and Acton (1987) have both identified problems about how relevant 'nomadism' is to many Gypsy groups.

Whilst these processes are managed by the non-Gypsy world, Gypsies also create and manage distance with the non-Gypsy world. Toninato identifies a significant gap in knowledge between academic accounts often by non-Gypsies of the history of Gypsy people and the accounts given by Gypsies themselves of their origins (Toninato 2006). In many ways this gap is also evident in terms of British Gypsy communities' sense of the political arguments around creating an imaginary, but potent international Gypsy nation.

3.6.4 Gypsies and Strangers

Simmel described the 'stranger' as 'the man who comes today and stays tomorrow' (1908, 1971:143). In doing so he draws out the characteristics of a figure he calls the 'wanderer', that is someone from outside a particular spatial boundary who appears within the boundary. The figure is of a traveller, someone on the move who appears amongst another settled group of people. The 'stranger' has the qualities of the 'wanderer' but what distinguishes the 'stranger' is that having arrived amongst a fixed group of people, the 'stranger' does not continue his journey the next day, or week, or month; but instead, the 'stranger' stops. The 'stranger' is a 'wanderer' at the end of his journey, a person who settles amongst the natives. The stranger's most important and defining characteristic relates to the relationship between his present circumstances amongst the company of natives and his past, other life. This relationship can be understood in terms of being both close and remote at the same time; spatially the 'stranger' is close living amongst the natives, culturally the 'stranger' represents a world that is distant and different.

The existence of the 'stranger' in these terms, that is an immigrant figure, carries with it a number of potentially positive overtones. Simmel himself notes that the position of a remote figure within a community speaks of 'a specific form of interaction', and the 'stranger' brings qualities from his distant world into his new group. This hints at both a sense of change by forcing an engagement between the settled community and the outside world, and, it also hints at the creativity that might be associated with 'strangers'.

Simmel provides a fuller picture of the stranger by considering the ways in which,

factors of repulsion and distance work to create a form of being together, a form of union based on interaction. (1971:144)

He notes how historically and economically the need to supply goods that originate from outside the boundaries of fixed society has generated a need for wanderers or 'strangers' to act in the role of a trader. By settling within a community the role of the trader creates and generates new economic outlets and opportunities. He notes how trade works to expand the number and type of goods and services available above to a self-sufficient, closed community.

Simmel typifies the 'stranger' as landless, in part this resonates with the historic legal restrictions placed upon Jews in Europe (see also Sennett, 1994), and also highlighting the distance side of the 'stranger' equation he links the wanderer to an associated sense of '*mobility*' (145). Mobility is important because it underlines the 'stranger' relationship with society,

The appearance of this mobility within a bounded group occasions that synthesis of nearness and remoteness which constitutes the formal position of the stranger. (1971:145)

By being mobile the 'stranger' is also in a position to come into contact with all parts of society, he is not restricted by the etiquettes or social mores of the society, (e.g. social class or family background). Simmel characterises the 'stranger' as 'objective' because he is free of the restrictions that being born in a place may entail, such objectivity,

does not signify mere detachment and nonparticipation, but is a distinct structure composed of remoteness and nearness, indifference and involvement. (1971:145)

Simmel draws out a consequence of the 'strangers' position – his remoteness, his detachment, his objectivity and contact with all parts of society – that the 'stranger' will often be the recipient of almost confessional accounts. That because of his outsider status, the 'stranger' can be trusted to hear things that can only be left unspoken amongst peers, or amongst people who are culturally similar. The 'stranger' is described in terms of freedom,

he is the freer man, practically and theoretically; he examines conditions with less prejudice; he assesses them against standards that are more general and more objective; and his actions are not confined by custom, piety or precedent. (1971:146)

Universality of 'Strangeness'

Simmel goes on to argue that 'strangeness' has a more universal role within society. He attempts to demonstrate that the characteristics of the 'stranger' are not necessarily restricted to the 'stranger'. He notes that,

the proportion of nearness and remoteness which gives the stranger the character of objectivity also finds practical expression in the more *abstract* nature of the relation to him. (1971:146)

Viewed from the outside, or more accurately viewed from the position of the insider, the 'stranger' has general qualities and attributes that are recognisable and shared with the wider population. But, between the insiders, there are shared traits and characteristics that demonstrate their difference from the universal traits (i.e. those shared with the stranger). Simmel works hard to emphasise what seems an obvious point; that difference works both ways. By doing so he highlights the different consequences that might result from the proportionality and the commonality associated with certain traits common to everyone. So,

commonality provides a basis for unifying the members, to be sure; but it does not specifically direct these particular persons to one another. A similarity so widely shared could just as easily unite each person with every possible other. This, too, is evidently a way in which a relationship includes both nearness and remoteness simultaneously. (1971:147)

The characteristics of the 'stranger' are therefore seen to be present within all relationships. The relationship of the 'stranger' to those around him is also revealed to some extent in its fullest ambiguity; similarities might make him a recognisable and close figure but at the same time similarities connect the stranger to a wider more distant world. Such similarities highlight the sense of distance.

Simmel underlines the importance of specific individual relationships and the materialisation of 'strangeness' at the most local level, by describing 'strangeness' in terms of the unique, one-off connection made by couples falling in love. Estrangement he suggests sets in as the couple come to realise, they are not unique but actually just the same as everyone else. Simmel thinks through the idea of the 'relationship' at a local level, between two people (not necessarily lovers), in some detail noting,

that which is common to two is perhaps never common *only* to them but belongs to a general conception which includes much else besides, many *possibilities* of similarities. (1971:148)

The similarities between two people and the closeness of a relationship that forms based upon such similarities is undermined by the sense that such similarities might be more widely shared with unknown numbers of other people. Similarity is seen as the basis of 'strangeness', it materialises almost as an

emotional response to the collision of the near, (the bonds of the relationship), and the far, (the unknown, unattached world of other people). Simmel seems to be arguing that the relationship is fraught with ambiguity; that the connections that should be the strongest in life are also in some degree under threat from the wider world. This also echoes the shared understandings of Anderson's (1991) imagined community but overlain with an unsettling sense of unease underpinning community membership.

The Figure of the 'Stranger'

In some ways Simmel makes an apparent U-turn by the end of his essay on the 'stranger'. Whilst originally he discusses the 'wanderer' who brings into society new and different qualities that are not indigenous to the native population, by the end of the essay he notes,

the stranger is near and far *at the same time*, as in any relationship based on merely universal human similarities. (1971:148)

What becomes clear is that by the end of the essay he is no longer discussing someone as specific as the 'wanderer' (or an immigrant or a newcomer), but rather he is outlining a 'type' of person and a type of 'strangeness'. Simmel argues that the 'stranger' is perceived by others in terms of his alien origin and characteristics associated with that origin; but that such characteristics are perceived as being shared alien characteristics. So a Jewish person for example might be understood in terms of simply being a member of the group or type, Jews; rather than distinguishing different characteristics on an individual basis.

Simmel concludes his essay by distinguishing the figure of the 'stranger' from the universal 'strangeness' associated with relationships. Whilst this suggests he is sticking to a distinction between his original figure of the 'wanderer' and the materialisation of 'strangeness' within societal relationships generally; there is perhaps a seed of doubt about how great the difference is between the two. In many respects Simmel has outlined the specific circumstances of the 'wanderer' figure, the general circumstances of societal relationships, and, the unsettling and ambiguous emotional responses around 'strangeness' that result from both. In some way the specific example of the 'wanderer' and the universal 'strangeness' seem not just to mirror each other but also stem from the same set of experiences; the recognition within any relationship of points of difference and points of similarity which play out in an ambiguous manner.

Gypsies and Strangers

In the past I have argued that Gypsies occupy a particularly ambiguous role in society, one that I describe as that of an 'exaggerated stranger' (Myers 2005, 2006; Bhopal and Myers 2008). Simmel's account of an immigrant who comes and lives amongst a new community has a resonance for all immigrant groups including Gypsies. The appearance of Gypsy groups throughout England, Scotland and Wales in the fifteenth century was rapidly greeted with a highly hostile reaction on the part of the state. Notably Henry VIII made being a Gypsy a capital offence and in the mid-seventeenth century Gypsies were sent as slaves to the Caribbean (Mayall, 2004). Whilst in subsequent years Gypsies have lived comparatively less dangerous lives, it remains well-documented that Gypsies have experienced on-going discrimination from the state (Mayall, 1994; 2005; Taylor, 2008), the media (Morris, 2006) and other British citizens (Holloway, 2005; Clark and Greenfields, 2006). They are readily identified as being different to other people living in Britain; unusually the discriminatory and racist responses towards them, appear to have been perpetuated by successive generations with a consistency unusual compared to other immigrant groups (Bhopal and Myers, 2008). There is an expectation that with time attitudes towards immigrants change; instead Gypsies appear to be regarded with much the same hostility as they faced when first arriving in the UK.

The 'exaggerated stranger' is based on two particular anomalies within the Gypsy experience of immigration to Britain. The first of these being that whilst identifiably immigrants, Gypsies are not newcomers but rather a well-established community. Despite their long presence, the tone of racism and discrimination towards Gypsies remains constant; with the same type of references to dirtiness, immorality or dishonesty prevalent in media accounts today that were common currency in the fifteenth century. Secondly, knowledge of Gypsy culture by the non-Gypsy majority is extremely limited. Both the daily aspects of individual's lives and also the main building blocks of cultural and ethnic identity, (e.g. the Indian diaspora, European enslavement or the impact of the Holocaust), are rarely acknowledged outside of Gypsy communities or amongst those sympathetic towards Gypsies. For a general population who are not well informed, the Gypsy is a figure who arrives not from somewhere else but from nowhere; a figure that is assumed to have nomadic characteristics but whose nomadism is not necessarily readily observable; and a figure who rather than adopting the closeness and visibility of an immigrant trying to succeed within society, instead often appears invisible, occupying marginal or discreet spaces and the possessor of a white skin. The 'exaggerated stranger' is a function of a static relation between Gypsy and non-Gypsy society; a response to a constant, unsettling ambiguity.

3.7 Citizenship, Belonging and Not Belonging

3.7.1 Introduction

There is a wide literature around citizenship (see Isin and Turner, 2002), which examines political activity in global and local forms, and in relation to a range of single issues such as disability and sexuality rights. Marshall (1950), Alexander (2006) and Turner (2001) all offer different accounts of what constitutes citizenship and civil society; often disagreeing about what constitutes being a 'good citizen'. However, if there is unanimity amongst their thinking it is that citizenship itself, the act of being a citizen offers a degree of protection on a more universal basis than that offered by the individual's own ability, or the protection offered by the closed self-interest groups of family or community. Isin (2002) challenges the assumption that citizenship is a virtuous process, suggesting rather that the process of becoming a citizen is a materialisation of becoming successful politically. He argues that the histories of such political processes are written by the victors, that is to say by those who successfully wrest political power from earlier dominant groups, and invariably, it is in their interests to provide an account of their political successes that is overwhelmingly positive.

This section of the literature review considers work that has examined ideas of belonging and not belonging by exploring literature that has considered the role of neighbours as well as examining citizenship in greater detail. Citizenship is considered particularly in the British context that emerges following the Second World War and as theorised by T.H.Marshall (1950). The section also discusses other accounts of citizenship including its later development in a British context.

3.7.2 Neighbours and Gypsies

There is only a small body of work that specifically considers relations between neighbours and which typically examines relationships between two antagonistic communities. Harris (1972) for example produces an account of relationships between protestant and catholic communities in Northern Ireland and whilst she acknowledges the role of economic and familial differences between neighbours, the greatest distinction between these communities is based upon their religious affiliation. Harris also describes how socially in

terms of lifestyle, attitudes and, to a lesser extent, economically, there were great similarities in their lives despite the religious divide. There are many parallels between Harris's work and that of Parkin (1969) who described relations between different tribes in a middle class suburb of Kampala. Again whilst noting the similarities between different tribal groups and social activity that occurred across tribal divides often based on comparable status, he also noted that membership of the tribal group was the over-riding fall-back position particularly at times of political tension. More recently Kitzinger (2002) poses the question 'The ultimate neighbour from Hell?', when discussing media representation of convicted paedophiles who return into the 'community' following their release from prison. Kitzinger suggests the 'media shift towards 'dumbed down' personalised stories' (2002:158), which exacerbate and frame a social concern (e.g. noisy neighbours or sex criminals), about neighbours is understood purely in terms of the individuals concerned, rather than understanding wider social problems such as economic and government policy failings. Other work on neighbours has highlighted positive aspects such as the potential for neighbours to help support the lives of elderly people (Nocon and Pearson, 2000), whilst also suggesting that local government policy makers often over-estimate and take for granted the effectiveness of such neighbourliness rather than supplying adequate services themselves.

The available literature on neighbours does not encompass the extent of Gypsy experiences of their non-Gypsy neighbours. There are a number of reasons for this; the first of which relate to the different social structures that are observable amongst many Gypsy communities, and the second, relating to the types of relationships that exist between Gypsies and non-Gypsies. The organisation of Gypsy lives in some ways ironically mimics that of non-Gypsies; for example the dispersal of families across many continents almost reflects the globalism associated with patterns of migration, in which increasing numbers of people move from one country to another; or, in another unexpected parallel could be discerned between isolated and regulated Gypsy sites and the appearance of gated communities. Where these comparisons unravel is in the ambiguous status accorded to Gypsies in these circumstances. As discussed, the global Gypsy does not have a territorial homeland to which he or she can return. Gypsies live in the space they stand on, in the nation whose boundary they are circumscribed by. Their global reach, characterised by nomadism and dispersal, does not emphasise similarity with other migration patterns but rather their strangeness. In the UK, sites maintained by local authorities are not situated in distant, inaccessible places to provide the types of protection associated with gated communities, but rather as a means of edging Gypsies away from the rest of the population. Simmel's *stranger* can be personified as a Gypsy partly because so many aspects of Gypsy lives that could be interpreted as suggesting similarity or closeness, are more generally read as creating

distance. Bhopal & Myers (2008) underline this point in their discussion of media accounts of the figure of the 'wealthy' Gypsy, who could easily resonate as a successful and admirable figure within political rhetoric that idolises self-motivated wealth creation. Instead figures of wealthy Gypsies materialise in the media characterised as being unworthy and undeserving of success and affluence (Bhopal and Myers, 2008), in terms recognisably similar to Kitzinger's (2002) 'media template', re-iterating and reproducing negative accounts. Within these contexts the relationship between Gypsies and their neighbours needs to be understood differently. There is real physical distance between Gypsies and non-Gypsies as a result of their geographical location and there is also the imagined distance generated by the stereotyping of Gypsy lifestyles.

As a group Gypsies are not bound by easily delineated ethnic, religious or national boundaries; they cannot be situated within the UK in the same way that Catholic and Protestant communities can be understood in Northern Ireland, or in the same type of relationships as newly arrived immigrants and indigenous Britons. In this research, which is concerned with families of Gypsies living on the south coast of England, social integration with neighbours is determined largely by their direct relations with other non-Gypsies, with the British state and its 'official' institutions, and with the attitudes and dispositions, that inform understandings of what is meant by 'Britishness'. This is perhaps most closely encompassed in discussions of what is meant by 'Citizenship', Bulmer and Rees note that,

"Citizenship" enabled the concept of a "society" to be deconstructed, so that it became possible to examine the extent to which full membership was accorded to all who lived within its boundaries (however these might be delineated). (1996: 269)

This section will now consider citizenship particularly in its post Second World War British setting as theorised by T.H. Marshall.

3.7.3 T.H. Marshall's vision of British citizenship

Marshall's (1950) essay, *Citizenship and Social Class*, grounds itself within the late nineteenth-century/early twentieth-century economic theory of Alfred Marshall (1873). Whilst (Alfred) Marshall's work reflected a rigorous scientific understanding and support for free market economies; what clearly appeals to (T.H.)

Marshall is the spirit of social equality that drives the work of his namesake. He notes how Marshall suggests a man's membership of the working classes reflects

the effect that his work produces on him rather than the effect that he produces on his work.
(Marshall, A. (1873:5) quoted in Marshall T.H. (1950)

and whilst this could not intellectually stand as an adequate definition of the working classes it is a phrase designed to 'catch the imagination' (Marshall T.H. 1992:6). He goes on to suggest that Alfred Marshall,

accepted as right and proper a wide range of quantitative or economic inequality, but condemned the qualitative inequality of difference between the man who was, 'by occupation at least, a gentleman' and the man who was not. (1992:6)

Alfred Marshall's work is useful because it has both the rigor of economic analysis to suggest that change is possible and also it is imbued with desire for such change to improve the quality of people's lives. Situated within a nineteenth-century faith in the free-market, Alfred Marshall suggests that beyond compulsory education the state should not overly meddle in people's lives.

50 years later and able to reflect upon the free-market's failure to exploit a period of intense technological development in the interests of the working classes, the immediate aftermath of the Second World War and subsequent election of Atlee's Labour Government, T.H. Marshall concludes the state has vastly greater potential to improve lives. T.H. Marshall argues that in the post-war setting, becoming a rounded individual rather than industrial cannon fodder, extends beyond the duties owed to the nation to the rights associated with membership of the nation. In positing this relationship between individual and nation Marshall outlines citizenship as the means by which individual's lives can be fulfilling and well rounded. In this relationship the state intervenes not to achieve social equality, but to ameliorate the worst excesses of the free-market and redress its worst inequalities. Marshall's essay needs to be understood as situated within a political moment in Britain, when, following dissemination of the *Beveridge Report* (Beveridge, 1942) the Labour government was implementing policy that created the Welfare State, including the creation of the National Health Service, increased family welfare payments and the related extension of National Insurance. The importance of economics as a means of delivering social justice is underlined by the report's author, the economist William Beveridge, who despite promoting state sponsored social policy still stressed the importance of the individual and the market;

social security must be achieved by co-operation between the State and the individual. The State should offer security for service and contribution. The State in organising security should not stifle incentive, opportunity, responsibility; in establishing a national minimum, it should leave room and encouragement for voluntary action by each individual to provide more than that minimum for himself and his family. (Beveridge 1942: 6-7)

Marshall's account of citizenship reflects both the political moment in time and the political geography of post-war Britain. Outside of Britain, Mann (1987) describes how different strategies have been used to avoid open conflict with the working class, which vary considerably depending upon the particular circumstances of different countries. Variables include the differing levels of industrialisation, variations in ratio between industrialised proletariat and agricultural workers and the impact of wars. Describing Marshall's arguments as 'Anglophile' (1987:340), Mann identifies within western industrial society five alternatives to citizenship: liberal, reformist, authoritarian monarchist, Fascist and authoritarian socialist. Elsewhere Turner notes that Marshall assumes a,

heterogeneous society in which regional, cultural and ethnic divisions were not important when compared to social class divisions. (2001:191)

Marshall does not therefore anticipate the wider effects of devolution or of greater ethnic diversity within British society, furthermore his model of citizenship does not embrace difference but rather assumes a one size fits all. Again this seems strikingly of its time; a post-war utility resolving an identifiable problem, (the social evils of inequality in Britain), in the short term through action rather than debate.

3.7.4 The Evolutionary nature of Marshall's Citizenship

Marshall's account of a British model of citizenship is essentially evolutionary tracing it's foundation in civil rights that emerge in eighteenth-century Britain, that is

the rights necessary for individual freedom – liberty of the person, freedom of speech, thought and faith, the right to own property and to conclude valid contracts, and the right to justice. (1992:8)

The nineteenth century sees a gradual extension of political rights, culminating (according to Marshall) in the 1918 *Franchise Act* which granted universal manhood suffrage. Marshall notes that some restrictions remained on women's suffrage, which rather understates the very restrictive gains made in the 1918 *Qualification of Women Act* which franchised only older, married and educated women. The enfranchisement of women on comparable terms to men only materialises with the 1928 *Representation of*

the People Act. The importance of this later date is that it sits closely with Neville Chamberlain's 1925 Conservative government's legislation to abolish Workhouses and bring an end to the Poor Laws, transferring such work from charities to the state. Marshall underlines the significance this has in social terms within the *psyche* of a nation, in which the workhouse was seen as a last resort and a threat to social status when he notes that,

The stigma which clung to poor relief expressed the deep feelings of a people who understood that those who accepted relief must cross the road that separated the community of citizens from the outcast company of the destitute. (1992:15)

The threat of the workhouse has a long engrained fear within British working life and as Cody (2000) notes this has always had a relationship with individuals' civil rights. Describing the implementation of the 1834 Poor Law she outlines how Liberal politicians reflecting the enterprising spirit of burgeoning capitalism saw unmarried mothers as a particular threat to the development of British society. The 1834 Poor Laws effectively removed more traditional community and charitable support for such women and forced them into destitution and the workhouse. 'Critics (of the Liberal government of the time) perceived the symbolic nature of disenfranchising society's weak in the bastardy clauses' (Cody 2000: 133) and felt this reflected the wider political motivations of a Liberal party who were not enfranchising propertyless men.

By 1949, when Marshall is writing, the evolutionary development of the British sense of its national characteristics and particularly that of the working class has been transformed by industrialisation and two World Wars. This materialises in Marshall's terms in the push for social rights in addition to civil and political rights. Social rights seem less easily definable for Marshall and in the provision of 'social services' they reflect,

not primarily a means of equalising incomes....What matters is that there is a general enrichment of the concrete substance of civilised life, a more general reduction of risk and insecurity, an equalisation between the more and the less fortunate at all levels – between the healthy and the sick, the employed and the unemployed, the old and the active, the bachelor and the father of a large family. (1992:33)

Marshall suggests citizenship promotes such social rights in the sense of policy that reflects an idealised community rather than in the nuts and bolts of what is actually delivered by legislation. He uses two particular policy areas to highlight this overarching sense of social rights that have a very specific relation to the lives of Gypsies living in Britain. The first relates to town planning and the second to education.

The key feature of town planning for Marshall is that it promotes community rights above those of the individual; housing policy is designed to shape types of communities in a holistic fashion that takes account of who lives where, the conditions they live in, their employment and social activities. By doing so town planning assigns status to individuals; it generates the type and conditions of individuals lives and these reflect degrees of their class status; so for example the middle classes will be provided for by town planners according to their status, they will live in middle class homes, on middle class streets and be employed within middle class jobs. Marshall notes that 'this is one example of the way citizenship is itself becoming the architect of social inequality' (1992:36); taking this one stage further we might see within the example of town planning, citizenship used as a device to either include or exclude different groups of people. The community that is being created by social planning in 1949, by a liberal-minded Labour government, is one that appears altruistic; one that vastly extends the expectations of greater rights to greater numbers of people but at the same time also promotes exclusivity. Town planning imagines the boundaries of communities and demarcates such boundaries in physical and mappable terms.

Marshall's interest in education is equally enlightening because he uses it to demonstrate that citizenship is founded as much on the citizens' responsibilities as upon their rights; Marshall argues education is not a right of a citizen but a duty owed by citizens to the state. Without an education citizens are unable to actively participate and contribute to their communities. Marshall cynically suggests this is most apparent in the extension of education to greater numbers of people as technology and industrialisation progresses; capitalist societies need to educate their workforces in order to exploit their abilities to a greater and more profitable degree. The distinction he draws between earlier extensions of education to that in the twentieth century is that education now is necessary to participate as citizens and in order to mitigate against capitalism's drive towards inequality.

3.7.5 Beyond T.H. Marshall: Other Citizenships

Turner (2001) outlines some failings in Marshall's arguments about what constitutes citizenship; he also depicts a more complex understanding of how citizenship operates and how national citizenship has been eroded. In particular Turner argues against the passive form of Marshall's citizenship that emphasises citizen's entitlements to rights rather than their active social participation in the state. Turner argues,

citizenship as a status position is not in itself sufficient to guarantee effective entitlement; effective citizenship has depended on three foundations or routes of entitlement: work, war and reproduction. (2001:192).

In some respects, Turner's three 'routes of entitlement' pose problems for many Gypsies; for Gypsies work is often tailored around the family, both providing for the family's needs and making time for wider family and community obligations, it may not be constructed within concerns about generating pensions or contributing to taxation to ensure road building projects or healthcare. Turner's interest in warfare is connected to his argument that there has been an erosion of citizenship in part since the Second World War and the ending of National Service (in 1960). Men have not been required to fight for their country and this has mitigated against the post-war drive towards a welfare state. Participation in the armed forces was not discussed by any of my respondents, however there is a body of evidence (Kenrick and Puxon, 1972; Acton, 1974; Taylor, 2008), that documents Gypsy men being conscripted into the armed forces and, (both men and women), into war work more generally throughout the Second World War, and after 1945, being obliged to do National Service. The Gypsy activist Damian Le Bas (2010) has also spoken about the importance within his family history of family members who were conscripted into the armed forces through National Service post-1945. Whereas Turner highlights such service as one of the fundamental routes in which men became entitled to citizenship, there is no subsequent evidence that it generated an entitlement to rights or even a perception of entitlement to rights. There is no evidence for example of adult Gypsies entering universities on the basis of national service entitlement and Gypsy children's access to education remained very limited into the 1980's (Plowden, 1967; Reiss, 1975; Bhopal et al, 2000; Myers and Bhopal, 2010). One reading of Kenrick and Puxon's (1972) account of the Second World War's impact on Gypsies is that in most respects it changed nothing about their general standing or status throughout Europe before and after the war despite the horrors of the Nazi holocaust and despite the wider participation of Gypsies in the Allied armed forces. Equally, although the 1945 government generated policy that in Turner's argument could be seen to link participation in the war effort with citizenship entitlements (e.g. free healthcare provision), for Gypsies many of these new policies seem to have had little direct impact upon their lives.

For Turner (2001) the future for citizenship if it is to remain a viable and useful means of producing a workable society lies in the globalisation of rights; so that 'social rights of nation states are being slowly replaced or, better still, augmented by human rights' (2001:203), and that, 'these new forms of citizenship are not specifically located within the nation-state' (2001:204). Turner notes how global rights have emerged

in response to some specific challenges such as AIDS and also to new kinds of politics such as the green/environmental agenda.

Hancock (1987) documents the explicitly transnational nature of discrimination against different Gypsy groups, and Myers and Bhopal (2009) suggest that in part there has been a failure in the international political campaigns for Gypsy rights. That human rights are applicable to Gypsies should be beyond dispute, but as has been made clear by the Council for Europe's Commissioner for Human Rights, the rights of Gypsies in the UK have not been protected (Gil-Robles, 2005), and discussing the wider European position he noted:

In most countries I have visited, the Roma populations face considerable obstacles to the enjoyment of basic rights, notably in the fields of access to health care, housing, education and employment and are often disproportionately affected by poverty. Discrimination and racism, also resulting in violence, remain serious problems throughout the continent, and present a major impediment to the full enjoyment of human rights and fundamental freedoms. (Gil-Robles, 2006:3)

In this context the very specific local relations of Gypsies on the south coast and their neighbours begins to have greater significance. Despite the global documentation of human rights being denied to many different Gypsy groups, and in the UK, despite national moves to tackle discrimination against Gypsy groups (e.g. the 1968 Caravan's Sites Act and more recently the 2006 ODPM Circular 01/2006 Planning For Gypsy And Traveller Caravan Sites), when interviewing Gypsy families it is hard not to conclude that many basic rights are still not accessible to them. In some sense this is derived from the lack of citizen status afforded to Gypsies. Even more locally on the south coast the websites of Southampton District Council, West Sussex County Council, Chichester City Council and Hampshire County Council all carry guidance on particular issues where Gypsies traditionally face discrimination, (e.g. education, health, housing/planning), and all make reference to the 1998 Human Rights Act which consolidated the UK's commitment to the European Convention on Human Rights. It is significant that discrimination is noted in terms of areas such as education, health and accommodation for Gypsies (both locally and globally), and yet these are all areas in which the 1945 government can be seen as responding towards the needs and concerns of its citizens.

3.7.6 Post Marshall British Citizenship

The late twentieth and early twenty-first century saw some newer discourses around citizenship in Britain associated with Tony Blair's prime ministership and New Labour rhetoric. This emerged throughout many

policy areas affecting daily life; including the *Crick Report's* (DfEE, 1998) findings that citizenship should be taught within the school curriculum, and Tony Blair's emphasis on the 'liveability' agenda (Blair, 2001; ODP, 2003), outlining a vision of what constituted acceptable behaviour in public spaces. Such recent constructions of what is understood by citizenship often emphasise an emergent culture that springs from diverse and differentiated sources, rather than embracing traditional or established types or groups of people and their traditions (McGhee, 2005; Young, 2003). Ironically Gypsy identities, which are often negotiated in different ways at different times, in different circumstances and amongst different people still appear to be problematic within contemporary thinking about citizenship. For example, when discussing education, Diane Reay (2008) notes how New Labour citizenship agendas foster middle class hegemony by melding traditional conservative thinking to neo-liberalism. According to Reay New Labour policies become 'a bridge between the past and the future, in which (Tony Blair) has acted as a conduit for very old inequalities of social class to be reinvented in new, thriving forms' (Reay 2008:647). In a context in which traditional class types are resurfacing within a citizenship agenda, Gypsies who have historically been misrepresented by the repetition of sedentary stereotypes (Cudworth, 2009; Bhopal and Myers, 2008) are further marginalised by the citizenship discourse. There is a sense that, although newer citizenship agendas recognise and embrace difference in a way that was never articulated by Marshall in the 1940s and 1950s, Gypsies still represent the wrong type of difference. They cannot for example be assimilated into easily understood patterns of class distinction; it is almost as if they do not know their place in society.

One consequence of remaining on the margins of citizenship discourses is that Gypsies are not afforded the protections offered by becoming citizens. Systematic abuse and harassment of Gypsy groups is not only evident in my research, but also supported by a large body of literature in the UK (Mayall 1988, 1995, Okely 1997, Cemlyn, 2008) and throughout the rest of the world (see Liégeois, 1983, Hancock, 1987, Puxon, 1987). Barany when discussing the historical position of East European Gypsies, states that they have,

languished at the bottom of social, economic and political hierarchies. Over those seven centuries, empires, authoritarian, and totalitarian states have come and gone, but in all of them the Roma occupied the lowest rung on the social scale. (Barany, 2002: 3)

The material realisation of policies shaped within discourses such as citizenship are intended or voiced as a means to counteract discriminatory behaviours, but when applied in relation to Gypsies they work to perpetuate and reinforce discrimination. Alexander (2006) describing the 'civil sphere' emphasises that this is not a surprising or new phenomenon, rather radical multiculturalists and conservatives all miss the point when they criticise the politics of agendas such as citizenship for failing to materialise in terms of an ideal

civil sphere. He suggests that instead there is a dynamic struggle between the ideal and what actually materialises in reality to 'produce the potentially liberating dynamics of contemporary life' (Alexander, 2006:402). He challenges the validity of Iris Marion Young's (2001) argument that the assertion of difference by marginalised groups is a step towards social justice by which, 'the dominant culture is forced to discover itself for the first time as specific [and] it becomes increasingly difficult for dominant groups to parade their norms as neutral' (1990:171). To which he poses the question,

When socially marginalized and culturally polluted groups make claims for recognition and respect, can the simple assertion of these claims, in and of itself, change the minds of the very dominant - that is, "selfish" – groups that have made them marginal and polluted? (2006:401)

For Gypsy lives, this question encompasses both more general issues about why they remain marginalised and also questions why, specific actions such as politically motivated policy, (e.g. the Race Relations Act 1976, the Race Relations Amendment Act 2000 and the Human Rights Act 1998), clearly directed at addressing inequality or racism fail to impact successfully on their lives. In discussing neighbours, citizenship is a means of exploring the relations between Gypsies and other people who live in their vicinity but who are established, (politically and culturally), as the dominant group within society. Alexander's description of dominant groups as "selfish" strikes an interesting note and underlines the sense that ineffective policy is deliberate and intentional rather than poorly conceived.

3.7.7 Situating Citizenship within Liberal Politics: equity, sympathy, social justice and their failures in the context of Gypsy experience

Discussing the 'cosmopolitanization' of human rights laws Nash (2009) describes the transition from citizenship that is understood in terms of the state, that is to say the rights and duties associated with being a member of a single nation, to transnational or global rights. She does so by focussing on the notion of global rights that as a non-citizen one should anticipate legally enforced rights similar to those enjoyed by the state's own citizens. Benhabib describes 'democratic iterations' (2007:31) that take place both within national political and legal discourses and also within public debates, that frame how rights are both understood and then implanted within legislation, these are,

complex processes of public argument, deliberation, and exchange through which universalist rights claims and principles are contested and contextualized, invoked and revoked, posited and positioned throughout legal and political institutions, as well as in the associations of civil society. (Benhabib, 2007:31)

Such on-going iterations have a long history and Nash notes the historical background to liberal claims about citizenship; citing the French *Declaration of the Rights of Man* and the American *Declaration of Independence* as starting points from which to explore the development of citizenship. In both cases the assertion of universal rights is not entirely accurate however, as the rights under discussion in these texts are specifically linked to an individual's status, as a citizen of France or America respectively, rather than a genuinely universal right applicable to anyone.

The transition over several centuries towards a more cosmopolitan understanding of rights reflects the emergence of a liberal politics linked to the (also emergent) primacy of individual identity. Taylor (1992) describes liberal politics as the 'politics of recognition'. He notes firstly the 'collapse of social hierarchies' (Taylor, 1992:26), as the traditional rankings of nobility and feudal structures wither away and perhaps more importantly describes an intensification of self-awareness around the end of the eighteenth-century, in which increasingly,

human beings are endowed with a moral sense, an intuitive feeling for what is right or wrong.
(Taylor, 1992:28)

The 'intuitive feeling' reflects the sense of the individuals' authentic self-understanding of personal motives that shift responsibility away from traditional Christian thinking emphasising calculations about the *consequences* of actions. As with declarations of human rights, the emphasis on individual intuition suggests a liberal perspective in which individuals understand something of themselves and something of those around them. Taylor understands the creation of individuals' identity to be a *dialogic* process developed by an engagement with society, with the *language* of others,

We become full human agents, capable of understanding ourselves, and hence of defining our identity, through our acquisition of rich human languages of expression. For my purposes here, I want to take *language* in a broad sense, covering not only the words we speak, but also other modes of expression whereby we define ourselves, including the "languages" of art, of gesture, of love, and the like. (Taylor, 1992:32)

Taylor's '*language* in a broad sense' echoes Benhabib's 'democratic iterations'; both contribute to the melding of individual and societal understandings of identity and how these concretely materialise in the legal and institutional framework of the nation. What is slightly less clear perhaps is how subaltern, marginal or outsider identities figure within a dominant, central and insider population.

Although there seems some truth in Alexander's (2006) dismissal of Young's (1990) argument that simply asserting the rights of marginal groups is an effective strategy against dominant groups; Taylor seems to

outline something more fundamental about the relation between the individual, (marginal or dominant), and those around him. Taylor suggests that identity is shaped both personally and in the public sphere by the individual's relations to other people. This 'demand' for recognition is therefore not just a demand by the minority group to be recognised. When making the case for a liberal politics it is equally the demand by the dominant group for the need to recognise minority cultures and for a politics of recognition. In the UK, the significance of a lack of recognition of Gypsy culture has been highlighted in the work of Acton (2004), who describes how the continued engagement of Gypsy families within schools is,

dependent on the multi-cultural respect which welcomes Roma/Gypsy/Traveller children as who they are with a culture that is also valid content for the education of other children. (2004:10)

It has also materialised within national policy including the funding of *Gypsy Roma Traveller History Months* since 2008 (see <http://www.grthm.co.uk/index.php>). Lord Adonis explained the need for a history month as a means of recognising Gypsy culture that would,

offer us all the chance to raise awareness and explore the history, culture and language of these communities... We will all be able to celebrate the richness that Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities bring to our everyday lives through their many and varied academic and artistic achievements. (Adonis 2008:6)

Gypsy Roma Traveller History Months build on the precedents of Black History Month which has existed in the United States since the mid-1920s as a means to promote an increased awareness of African-American heritage and history often, though not exclusively, in a school context (Bell, 1984). Although the *Gypsy Roma Traveller History Months* typically include events that cut across many different interests and parts of society, it was interesting to note that Lord Adonis was Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Schools, and the quote above was taken from a document concerned with Gypsy education, (rather than community affairs for example). This places the national policy emphasis of support for a history month within the context of education as an obligation of the citizen, mirroring Marshall's (1950) argument that education is an obligation, necessary to become a citizen. In this case national policy seems to work towards recognition of Gypsy culture within its liberal understandings of requiring citizens to educate their children to become citizens in the future.

The recognition of subaltern cultures is vital to the recognition of their identity, which is to recognise their most fundamental and defining characteristics. The need to recognise identity within the context of the politics of "multiculturalism" is based on the need to appreciate the worth of minority groups,

The thesis is that our identity is partly shaped by recognition or its absence, often by the misrecognition of others, and so a person or group of people can suffer real damage, real distortion, if the people or society around them mirror back to them a confining or demeaning or contemptible picture of themselves. Nonrecognition or misrecognition can inflict harm, can be a form of oppression, imprisoning someone in a false, distorted, and reduced mode of being. (Taylor, 1992:25)

Alexander (2006) describes how the 'civil sphere', that is to say the face of society that works communally and with sympathy for others and aims for social solidarity, works to limit the dominance of self-interest groups or cliques. Such self-interested groups might be associated with family, religious or community type structures that are seen to bind society together. Alexander looks to create, 'a solidarity sphere, in which a certain kind of universalising community comes to be culturally defined and to some degree institutionally enforced' (Alexander 2006:31). The enforcement of communal values draws out a need to distinguish between public and private worlds, with an emphasis placed upon a liberal public good, in which citizens actively participate in repairing the damage of sectarian interests. This institutionalisation takes several forms, on the one hand Alexander suggests acts of social or political repair that might mitigate against more sectarian interests (he cites the American Civil Rights Movement as a prime example), and on the other hand, he suggests 'the Law' has a role to play in providing a regulatory boundary to the civil sphere. The importance of the law is that it can cross the threshold of non-civil society, that is to say it can regulate within the worlds of sectarian self-interest groups. In a case of wife battering or child abuse within a family, within the boundaries of a non-civil, self-interest group, the law is capable of intervening,

The formal and explicit charge is simply that the abusive family member has broken the law. At a deeper level, however, this intervention is legitimated on the grounds that participants in the familial sphere have not only sphere-specific duties – as father and husband, wife and mother, child and sibling – but also obligations to a wider community defined in civil terms.' (Alexander, 2006:153)

In principle the institutionalisation of the law allows for the breakdown of exclusive community barriers and for the promotion of more tolerant communal values that are shared universally and across self-interest groups.

3.7.8 Acts of Civil Repair and Gypsies

Alexander (2006) describes acts of 'civil repair' as social or political acts designed to repair the damage to the civil sphere by self-interest groups. This section considers two specific examples of acts of civil repair that should have positively impacted upon Gypsy communities. Firstly the work of Traveller Education

Services to ensure that schools adequately catered for the needs of Gypsy and Traveller children. Secondly the ODPM circular 2006/01 designed to put pressure on local planning departments to be more sympathetic towards the needs and planning applications in particular of Gypsy and Traveller groups seeking to remain on land they own.

The work of Traveller Education Services (TES) is notoriously underfunded and under-resourced and considered by many of its staff to be seriously marginalized within local authority education departments (Danaher *et al*, 2007). In discussions with TES members, what is often articulated is their sense of working against the local education authority and schools, rather than working with them. A continuing impact of this relationship is that many Gypsy children still fail to receive an education that meets their needs, or is of a comparable quality to that of their non-Gypsy peers. Similarly the ODPM (2006) circular has been met by considerable resistance from political parties, local residents and council planning officials. When John Prescott then Deputy Prime Minister, first approached councils to be more flexible in their response to Gypsy planning applications, (eventually materialising as the 2006 circular), this was the trigger for a series of newspaper accounts, (see for example *The Sun*'s headline story '*Stamp On the Camps*' of 10 March 2005 and its editorial *The Sun Says* of 21 March 2005), that vilified Gypsies in hugely inflammatory tones and later used by the leader of the Conservative Party as part of an equally inflammatory election campaign speech (Howard, 2005). For a very brief period in the run up to the 2005 election the need to counter state acts of civil repair on behalf of Gypsy communities revealed a widespread antagonism towards Gypsies in the media and amongst politicians (Myers, 2007; Bhopal and Myers, 2008). In many ways the materialisation of an act of 'civil repair' in relation to a planning application that uses the ODPM circular as its starting point, is the moment at which local residents' views are heard and their concerns acted on. In chapter 4 (space and accommodation) several respondents describe how applying for planning permission was a difficult process, with permission often refused following local resident's protests. What emerges in this research is evidence that acts of civil repair often work to promote the dominant population's interests at a local level, rather than sub-altern or marginal groups.

3.7.9 Gypsies, Citizenship and non-citizenship

The flux between individuals and community and the need to shape the nation reflects Benedict Anderson's (1991) portrayal of the shaping of nations as imagined communities. It reflects the need to apply a structure

that encompasses many different types and groups and classes of people in order to be successful. It does not necessarily follow that it should encompass all different groups of people. Gypsies appear to be one group who do not seem to fit within the boundaries of citizenship.

Kenrick and Bakewell (1990) suggest that World War Two, conscription and post-war welfare reforms all had a significant impact upon the lives of Gypsies. Noting that following the repeal of anti-Gypsy legislation in 1780 most Gypsies 'survived on the margins of society' (Kenrick and Bakewell, 1990:9), this changed dramatically with the outbreak of World War Two and conscription. Many men were recruited and deployed to the front line and many women recruited to work on the land or in munitions factories. In the immediate aftermath of World War Two, Kenrick and Bakewell (1990) also suggest a greater degree of tolerance was afforded to Gypsies, partly reflecting the more liberal attitude of Atlee's Labour government but also more specifically reflecting the post-war state of the nation. With many families bombed out of their homes and forced into temporary, prefabricated housing, 'Gypsies in their caravans were no longer an anomaly' (1990:10) and following the destruction of the war, there was plenty of reconstruction work available, which suited the skills and work patterns of Gypsies. Kenrick and Bakewell's admittedly very brief account of the effects of war paints a slightly rosy picture of the Gypsy contribution to the war effort; noting their heroism and perhaps stereotypically suggesting they were 'valued as snipers and scouts' (1990:10). Taylor (2008) offers up a rather more detailed analysis that includes references to many newspaper sources and first-hand accounts, that underline the changing relationship that the war imposed upon Gypsy and non-Gypsy communities. Gypsies were conscripted into the forces and worked productively on the home-front, promoting greater understanding between communities who would not ordinarily have encountered each other to the same degree. However, Taylor also notes cases of desertion, the decampment of some communities to Ireland for the duration of the war and accusations of profiteering levelled at some Gypsies. Discussing avoidance of military service in particular, Taylor questions to what degree 'Travellers' actions during the war were a result of their *Traveller* identity' (2008:40) and how much reflected more general behaviours of a wartime population. Perhaps the most telling account of the status attributed to Gypsies by the state emerges in Taylor's discussion of a scheme promoted in 1943 by a Gypsy called Ernest Williams to engage Gypsies with agricultural work (Taylor 2008, see also Surrey Advertiser (1943) and Slough Observer (1943) both quoted by Taylor). Taylor notes how despite the apparent success of the scheme it was not promoted or actively supported by any official arm of government,

The implication was that where Travellers failed to engage in the home front it was their fault and not that of the state. (Taylor 2008:44)

Taylor suggests that as the war progressed and daily life for the British population became progressively harder, attitudes towards Gypsies also hardened into familiar stereotypes. Gypsies were seen either as idle shirkers, or as free and easy types unaffected by the national crisis at hand and unschooled in concepts such as patriotism and wider communitarian values promoted by the war effort. She concludes that by 1945,

Travellers emerged from the war with their position in modern Britain at best ambiguous. Nomadism served to reconfirm Travellers as outsiders, and suggested that they were working against the collective ethos that had emerged during the war, and was to be such an important part in the formation of the welfare state. (Taylor 2008:48)

There is an interesting comparison to be made between life in Britain for Gypsies during wartime and that experienced within occupied France. In both cases it would appear that as the war progressed and the conditions for the general population became harder, the stereotypes associated with Gypsies become more readily apparent and translate into an anti-Gypsy mood. Fogg (2008) describes how life in Vichy France during the Nazi occupation allowed existing stereotypes and prejudices against Gypsies to harden and become the *raison d'être* for repressive measures that restricted Gypsy movements and their ability to generate income, and, also subjected Gypsies to intense surveillance from the police. Fogg suggests that during a time of great hardships, when criminality became the norm for many families trying to survive; Gypsies were singled out for acts of criminality that were commonplace throughout the general population. Other characteristics, such as Gypsies' emphasis on strong family bonds, which should have resonated with the wider goals of the Vichy regime were not regarded positively but rather inverted so as to maintain a distinction between the perception of French family values and Gypsy values. Fogg describes how even when the strength of Gypsy family ties was at its most apparent, during the internment of Gypsies in French concentration camps, this was reinterpreted in terms of Gypsy families exploiting their children. The overarching aim of the Vichy regime when it interred Gypsies in these camps was to forcibly assimilate Gypsies within French community values,

Theoretically, once nomads changed their work habits and acquired a new idea of family and society, they could reenter the French national community. (Fogg, 2008:353)

What is interesting in Fogg's account is the sense in which Gypsy difference is understood by the non-Gypsy population to be a cultural rather than an ethnic difference.

In post-war Britain, Atlee's government delivered citizenship in Marshall's terms; on the one hand citizens were assured rights but on the other they were also assigned duties. The duties attached to membership of

the Welfare State included the demands of being a productive citizen; that is a citizen who contributed to the ethos of British citizenship by living a productive life and adopting traditional lifestyles, and equally importantly, who contributed through national insurance contributions. Taylor (2008) notes how this early incarnation of the welfare state worked unfavourably against those who either did not contribute, or were *perceived* not to contribute, including unmarried mothers, war disabled and the wageless. In many ways this reflected earlier historical precedents such as the 1834 Poor Law which tended to disenfranchise those groups who were regarded as unproductive, regardless of their personal circumstances. In order to generate citizenship that is imbued with an inclusive ethos, it was also necessary to imagine who does not belong; in other words citizenship needed to be exclusive as well as inclusive. That this inclusive/exclusive binary is *imagined* into existence is demonstrated by the part played by Gypsies who were contributors to both wartime and post-war Britain. As discussed, Gypsy men were conscripted and fought during the war; Gypsy men and women were involved in the home front activities; and, following the war Gypsy men in particular would seek work in the reconstruction work overtaking the nation. However, as Taylor notes the resurgence in stereotypes about Gypsies and the representation of them as outsiders with lifestyles that did not match expectations of the majority population, led to Gypsies being perceived as not contributing to the state and therefore not being eligible to the full range of welfare state benefits.

3.8 Conclusions

This chapter has provided a review of the wide range of literature that examines Gypsies and contextualised this within work that considers ideas of belonging such as community and citizenship and of not belonging such as *the stranger*. In particular it has highlighted British experiences relevant to Gypsy families living on the south coast. The following five chapters present findings from the research which are then related to this wider body of knowledge, they are: Chapter 4 Space and accommodation, Chapter 5 Work and income, Chapter 6 Education, Chapter 7 Citizenship and Chapter 8 Community.

Chapter 4 Space and Accommodation

4.1 Introduction

This chapter will consider the physical locations of respondents' homes. In particular it looks at families who live on what respondents generally referred to as 'sites'. That is families who are accommodated in proximity with other Gypsy families either on land that is specifically made available to Gypsy families by the local authority; or, families who live on land that is privately owned but rented to Gypsy families; or, families who own land which they use either just for themselves or for themselves and extended family relatives to live on.

There are a number of reasons for concentrating on the 'site' as an important spatial element of Gypsy life that has more relevance than other circumstances. 'Sites' represent the manifestation of a spatial relationship between different Gypsy families; there is a physical connection determined by the proximity of people living together. Such proximity highlights the social settings of Gypsy lives and provides a means of understanding relationships that exist between them. Where sites are owned and managed by local authorities, these are spaces that are allocated to Gypsies by non-Gypsies. Local authority sites can be interpreted very specifically as representing the space that non-Gypsy society considers appropriate for Gypsies to occupy. Control by non-Gypsies over the choice of location also extends to privately owned sites through the processes of planning application decisions. Despite the impact of planning decisions, privately owned 'sites' often represent a greater expression of choice on the part of families about where they would like to live, and like their non-Gypsy neighbours, such choices reflect commonly held desires such as suitability for livelihood, aspirations for an enjoyable/comfortable life and concerns about the safety and well-being of the family.

Finally the chapter examines the accommodation of families who do not live on sites, (primarily respondents who were housed), and discusses parallels and differences that were apparent in their lives related to their occupation of space. The chapter discusses the aspirations of families who were currently housed but who often discussed the possibilities for living on their own land or a local authority site.

What emerged when looking at different types of sites is a certain commonality about their circumstances whether local authority or privately owned. This chapter therefore considers the degree to which the spatial relationship between Gypsies and non-Gypsies is imposed by the dominant society upon a minority group as opposed to being a negotiated relationship between them.

Understanding how respondents came to be living in their current accommodation was an important element of this research, with its emphasis on understanding the narratives of individual respondent's lives.

Ricoeur's (1980) discussion of narrative would suggest the decisions made by respondents that led to their living on a site or in a house are related to their identity; it is a process of 'becoming' (Hall, 2003) in which the identity of respondents has been shaped by earlier events.

The location of Gypsies informs understandings of the difference between Gypsy and non-Gypsy society and in particular it provides some physical evidence of the boundary lines that are drawn between them. By examining how and why Gypsies often live on sites it is possible to consider narrative accounts that explain the choices and decisions made by Gypsies and significant events that have shaped their lives.

This chapter begins by discussing the policy background that has informed planning decisions relating to Gypsy accommodation in the context of citizenship. There follows a brief description of families and their accommodation circumstances during the research. It then presents brief descriptions of the different sites visited during the research. In order to interrogate the reasons why Gypsies live in particular spaces it considers both, the dissimilarities between different sites and the reasons for such dissimilarities, and also, the similarities between different sites. In looking at similarities there is a particular interest in identifying apparent similarities within different types of circumstance; so for example where the spaces of local authorities sites and private sites share similar characteristics. Contextualising the differences and dissimilarities in circumstances experienced by respondents is particularly important in this research to make clear the breadth of differently experienced lives that are covered by the term 'Gypsy', or as Mr U. suggested:

we're all different, same as anywhere really, you get good and bad, rich and poor... (Mr U.)

and, describing differences between his own Irish Traveller family and other English Gypsies on a local authority site Mr V. noted,

It's OK. We say good morning. Say hello. But we keep to ourselves and that's fine. It's very quiet. No trouble. Keep to ourselves. (Mr V.)

Mr V.'s comments seemed to acknowledge both the linkage that could be made between his and other families living on a local authority site, whilst at the same time making it clear there were differences between them.

4.2 Gypsies, Planning and Citizenship

As discussed Marshall (1950) notes the importance of town planning as a means of engineering society. This section argues that such legislation has largely been used as an exclusionary process and has highlighted the differences of Gypsies, with the consequence that they are denied citizenship status. Sibley (1995) describes the discussions that materialised in the House of Lords when the Moveable Dwellings Bill, (first mooted in the late nineteenth century), was discussed in Parliamentary debates in 1908 and 1911. The bill was intended to regulate the accommodation conditions of nomads. Sibley notes how there was a division between those who were very hostile to Gypsies living in moveable dwelling and saw Gypsies as,

a minority which did not fit in rural areas and their lack of fit made them polluting and threatening (Sibley, 1995:105)

and those who were more sympathetic to Gypsies. In the latter case they were understood as a natural feature of rural life who, in terms of the Moveable Dwellings Bill, should be considered more like 'the urban working classes, thus de-emphasizing their difference (and deviance)' (Sibley 1995:105). In both accounts the over-arching ethos of what is being proposed is that the interests of the dominant population should regulate Gypsy lifestyles through state intervention. Taylor (2008) underlines this firstly by noting the apparent irony of wealthy landowners in the House of Lords demanding that the state should protect their interests, and secondly in a discussion of the contributions made to the 1908 and 1911 debates by public officials,

Local authority and health professionals who gave evidence had one common theme: that action was needed to control this class of people, irrespective of whether or not they were a health or public order risk. (Taylor, 2008:57)

The state in the early twentieth-century responds to modernity, to ever-increasing urbanisation and to changing political understandings of citizenship by assuming the need to assert a greater influence over everybody within its remit and, in doing so, to determine what society should look like. The Moveable Dwellings Bill failed to become legislation for a number of reasons, including some organised resistance to such legislation by Travelling Showmen, who organised the nascent Showmen's Guild under its original name of the Van Dweller's Association (VDA) (Clark, 2006). Also, and probably more significantly it was hampered at a bureaucratic level by civil servants, who sought to oppose change generally and in particular when it was driven by old elites, (e.g. members of the House of Lords who were significant land owners), whose influence was not as powerful as it once was. However, within these debates we can clearly see the ethos of a proto-citizenship agenda that identifies Gypsies as different and other to the bulk of the population and therefore looks to regulate their otherness.

4.3 The Marginal Spaces of Gypsies

One of the most visible materialisations of the otherness of Gypsies within contemporary British society is their spatial location. The provision of accommodation for Gypsy families on local authority sites, which are often located at a distance from accommodation for non-Gypsies, and the other marginal spaces occupied by many Gypsy families (Cripps, 1977; Taylor, 2008), suggests their otherness is mirrored in their physical situations.

Niner (2002, 2003) documents the systemic failures in local authority site provision both in terms of the numbers of pitches made available for Gypsies, the suitability of accommodation on such sites for the people who are intended to live there and the quality of accommodation that is provided. Niner also documents how these failures have been consistently identified in successive government reports and how identifiable solutions to tackle these failures, have consistently not been implemented by government. Niner highlights the large body of government funded research that has reported this on-going failure including: the 1965 census of Gypsies and other Travellers (Adams, 1967), which was largely used to inform the Caravans Site Act 1968; the 1977 Cripps Report which reviewed failures in the implementation and effectiveness of the Caravan Sites Act; the unpublished research commissioned by the Department of the Environment and the Welsh Office in the early 1980s (Smith et al, 1982); Wibberley's 1986 report on the failures of the Caravan

Site Act; and, in the early 1990's Todd and Clark report on Gypsy Site Provision by Local Authorities (1991a) which resulted in the first good practice guide for local authority site provision (Todd and Clark 1991b). The late 1990s saw the emphasis of government interest in Gypsy sites switching to the management and policing of unauthorised sites (Niner et al, 1998; Cowan et al, 2001). Having established the availability of so much detailed research, Niner damningly notes,

Perhaps the most striking impression from this spectrum of research and reports from almost forty years is the similarity of the issues and concerns being discussed, and the resistance of the problems being identified to 'solution'. There are passages from the report on the 1965 census (Adams 1967), from the Cripps (1977) or Wibberley (1986) reports which apply equally well today. There are particular continuities in terms of basic demographic factors, poor health, prejudice and discrimination on the part of the settled community and very poor living conditions (as perceived by settled observers and policy makers at least) experienced by Gypsies and other Travellers. (Niner, 2003:39)

In her report for the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister in the preceding year Niner (2002) documented how the physical locations of many local authority sites left much to be desired and in doing so suggested little had changed since Cripps noted that 'No non-Gypsy family would be expected to live in such places' (1976:17);

most sites (70%) are located in fringe areas of towns or villages (70%), and a further fifth (19%) are in rural areas. The most common adjacent land use (for 60% of sites) is a working farm. The next most significant adjacent land uses are commercial (18%); other (10%); and industrial (9%). Only 11% of sites have residential or mixed residential land use next to them. Clearly, local authority Gypsy/Traveller sites are mostly located in nonresidential areas. Given these locations it is no surprise that most sites are located at a distance from some common services: 68% of sites are more than 1 kilometer from a primary school and 55% are more than 1km from a post office. Over a third (38%) are over 1km from public transport.

Around half of all sites suffer from problems from adjoining land or activities to some extent. The most common source of problems are motorways or major roads (26% of sites), followed by railways (13%); rubbish tips (12%); industrial or commercial activity (8%) and sewage works (3%). This offers some support for the view that Gypsy/Traveller sites are more likely than permanent housing to be located near to unpleasant land uses or activities. (ODPM, 2002:22)

Cripps, like other more recent commentators (Taylor, 2008), identified that although the Caravan Sites Act had been promoted as a means of ensuring sites were available for Gypsies and in particular for guaranteeing nomadic aspects of Gypsy lifestyles; the provision of sites by local authorities was designed to control aspects of Gypsy lives by the local authority, and the non-Gypsy communities represented by the local authority. In addition to generally providing fewer pitches than was realistically required for the Gypsy communities in their areas, the sites that were provided were often on marginal land that could not be developed for any other more profitable purpose (Cripps, 1976; Greenfields, 2006b; Taylor, 2008).

James (2007) discusses the policing of marginal spaces occupied by Gypsies and notes the prevalence of surveillance regimes, in which the only demonstration of the police working as part of a multi-agency effort, is when an eviction takes place and the police provide evidence against Gypsies. She suggests that the work of the police is understood in terms of 'community policing', but that it 'attempt(s) to manage 'contested perceptions of risk' wherein the voices of Gypsies and Travellers are discounted in favour of those of the public who fear the risk of property loss or damage' (James 2007:376). The 'community' in 'community policing' is therefore identified as being the non-Gypsy population.

In addition to Local Authority sites many Gypsies also live on private sites, both commercially run or owner occupied, and, also in bricks and mortar housing, (often owned by local authorities or housing associations). Niner (2003) notes that for many Gypsies owning their own piece of land in order to provide accommodation for a small number of closely related families is their ideal option, but one that is often impossible to implement due to cost. Niner (2003) also notes that housing is seen by many Gypsies to be a poor option associated with being cut off from networks of other Gypsies and similar cultural links, and a sense of being closed in and distanced from nature.

4.4 Families and their Accommodation

The majority of families lived in static trailers either on sites or on their own private land; a minority of families were housed; and, one family was living by the roadside (see table 6.1).

	Families	%
Local Authority Site	11	34%
Privately owned site	4	13%
Private Land	6	19%
Housed	10	31%
Roadside	1	3%
Total	32	

Table 4.1 Location of families' accommodation

Families living on privately owned land occupied a variety of different homes including static trailers, mobile caravans and bricks and mortar housing. All the housed families who were not living on their own

land rented their accommodation either from housing associations or from the local council. One family living by the roadside occupied a mobile caravan. Table 4.2 provides a breakdown of the primary types of accommodation occupied by families (some families had more than one type of accommodation available to them e.g. the L.'s owned several houses, a static trailer and mobile caravans situated on their land).

	Families	%
Static Trailer	14	44%
Mobile Caravan	7	22%
Housed (Housing Assoc. or Council House)	10	31%
House on own land	1	3%
Total	32	

Table 4.2 Families Primary Accommodation

The majority of families interviewed lived on sites in static trailers; that is to say in trailers that would not generally move from the site. A small number of families lived in trailers or caravans that were mobile, mostly these were families who until very recently were following a mobile lifestyle (the travelling element within their lives was related either to work patterns e.g. moving from place to place to pitch for work or related to specific sets of circumstances such as not having a permanent place to stay resulting in regular evictions from unauthorised sites). Most of the families who had not had a permanent base, when interviewed explained how they now considered themselves more settled (in terms of their relationship to local authority sites), they were however, still living in the same caravans they had used whilst travelling. A handful of very affluent families maintained very expensive mobile trailers that they used to conduct other aspects of their lives; so, although they were permanently based on their own land they would travel with their trailer to social/income-generating functions such as horse fairs and also on holiday/income-generating trips abroad. Within this last group I would also include two families of Travelling Showmen who had a permanent base on their own land that was used during the winter, but whose trailers were necessarily mobile in order to travel to showgrounds throughout the fair season. As will be discussed elsewhere families often made very clear distinctions between the circumstances of their own lives and those of other families, that were not necessarily that apparent. Travelling Showmen families, for example, would clearly distinguish themselves, their lifestyle and culture from a family of wealthy Gypsies living 15 miles, away in almost identical circumstances to their own, and who seemingly shared many of the same values and outlooks on life. Such distinctions are examined in other chapters whilst this chapter concentrates on the physical spaces

of 'sites'. Whilst this chapter is primarily concerned with 'sites' it will also examine the circumstances of families not living on sites; those who were 'housed' as well as those who did not have a permanent base.

4.5 Sites visited during the research

The descriptions of the sites that follow have all been anonymised to protect the identity of respondents.

4.5.1 Privately owned Sites

Waterhouse

Waterhouse is situated in a very quiet, rural part of West Sussex. Mr Y. owns the site which consists of three pitches for his own trailer and two others occupied by close family members. His own pitch includes space for several cars, a large aviary, a small garden, a substantial workshop and several sheds. The whole area is immaculately maintained and there are a number of ostentatious pieces of statuary. The workshop is very large and is used for renovating old Gypsy horse-drawn caravans which are then sold. Next to Mr Y.'s pitch there is a fenced off area which in part serves as a builders yard and the whole site is surrounded by two further fields belonging to Mr Y. There are no immediate residential neighbours; Mr Y.'s land backs on to farm land and also the main A road. The nearest neighbours live in a village one or two miles away.

Driving to the site it is very easy to miss its turn-off. There is only a very small, discreet signpost indicating a turn-off from a quiet B Road. In the winter with trees completely denuded of leaves it is just possible to glimpse a trailer from the road but by and large no one would notice the presence of families living on the site. Mr Y. fought and won a major test case to secure planning permission for the site with the city council, in the face of local objections and a prolonged campaign by councillors, to reject planning permission.

New Meadow

The E.'s are living on about an acre of land that they own with one trailer, a summer house and a storage container. For several years the E.'s lived in the adjoining house and owned two or three acres of land around the house. They became involved in an obscure dispute with their mortgage company and had to relinquish the house and most of their land. Having retained ownership of the remaining land they have been living in the trailer, which they consider to be a temporary arrangement, for about 10 months. Their long-

term plan is for Mr E. to build a ranch style house on the land. They have not applied for planning permission either for the current temporary arrangements or their proposed long term home. According to Mrs E. they will build the ranch house and 'hope' that their neighbours do not get the local council involved. Apart from their old house, (which is still empty), they have no other direct neighbours; their land is surrounded by paddocks owned by local stables and by nurseries.

The E.'s have partially landscaped the land around the trailer to provide a track for BMX bikes. There is also space set aside for use as a builder's yard; currently this is filled with a large number of bricks from a demolition job completed by Mr E. which he intends to reuse for his ranch house. Mr E. has planted 75 3ft pine trees around the outer edge of this land which will provide a degree of privacy for the family from the surrounding fields. Sometimes their site can appear untidy with sun loungers, barbecues, assorted bits of furniture and a children's tent scattered around and other times it is immaculately tidy. This seems to reflect both the temporary nature of the E.'s current arrangements, (they are very pushed for storage space at the moment), and also a very homely reflection of family life.

September 2009 update on the E.'s at New Meadow

The E.'s District Council received a complaint from their Parish Council about the E's occupation of a trailer on their land. As a result Mr & Mrs E. were visited by a planning officer from the council and in consequence applied for a temporary (3 year) planning permission to remain on their land. Mr E. recalled an interesting conversation with the planning officer who was initially very sympathetic to their predicament, (i.e. having been evicted from their house and forced to live in the trailer following mortgage difficulties). However, when he discovered the E.'s were Gypsies his whole attitude changed and according to Mr E., 'he wouldn't even sit down and drink our tea anymore'.

Marwell private site

This site was described to me by a member of Hampshire Traveller Education Services as, 'being like a ranch on Dallas', (the 1970's US soap opera about Texas oil folk living on expansive cattle ranches), this is not quite true but it is an idyllic rural setting. Mr W. owns a considerable amount of land and has built two pitches close to each other for his own family and one other pitch (currently empty but intended for another family member). There are also modern newly built stables for a dozen horses and paddocks. The fencing for the paddocks gives something of the illusion of a Texas ranch. The site, which is surrounded by farmland, is approached from the main road via a long gravel drive. The day I visited was shortly after major

snow storms in the south of England. All the surrounding fields still covered in frozen snow and there were several large snowmen still standing. The W.'s have no immediate neighbours; it is a good ten minute drive to any nearby village and twice that to a town with a supermarket.

Woodland private site

This privately owned site is very hard to locate along several very small winding B roads none of which appear to be directly connected to any significant through route. I was taken to this site by a TES field worker, who noted that the site did not have planning permission but that the council were temporarily letting it remain until a permanent decision was made. He also suggested that he couldn't see what the problem was with the site as, 'nobody even knows it's here, you can't see it from any of the roads'. Access to and from the site was very poor and it was almost impossible for drivers to turn vehicles around once they were on the site; generally it was necessary to reverse out, around a blind bend, (I nearly ran over a dog in this process and it posed similar dangers for children).

Whilst the immediate locality of Woodland was an idyllic rural setting, the site itself appeared to have been cut into a dense area of woodland with no immediately obvious reason to identify why this location in particular was chosen. The proximity of the woods on all sides made the site intensely claustrophobic. There are 5 pitches on the site all of which appeared quite run down; the trailers on the site all looked old and in need of repair or replacement. Trailers, vans and trucks were crammed onto the site to make the best use of a very restrictive space.

I found the site quite depressing, (more so than some other, more obviously run down and/or poorly situated local authority sites), and felt physically uncomfortable driving on to the site, getting out of the car without banging the door and then making my way to individual trailers. Mrs J. when asked what sort of a place it was to live on said, 'It's good. Nice and quiet. No trouble.'

Old Farm Site

This is not really a site when compared to other respondents' accommodation. Mr L. purchased land and two houses from a local farmer situated within the wider boundaries of a very large farm. Since then he built another bungalow and an enormous warehouse. The new Bungalow and the warehouse are separated by about 20 feet despite the large amount of free space in adjacent fields. All three houses are occupied by Mr L. and close family members.

Mr L. runs a 'fork-lift company', that is to say he buys and sells fork-lift trucks. His warehouse was also being used to store other goods that were being unloaded from a large articulated lorry at the time I visited. The surrounding fields owned by Mr L. were being used for business activities, (e.g. unloading and parking articulated lorries), and also for leisure activities. The L.'s had erected a large temporary swimming pool and their boys rode quad bikes/motorbikes in fields. There are two access roads onto the site; one being the original lane to the houses and the second was a track across the fields used by lorries and visitors. I drove across the field, (on Mr L.'s explicit instructions), when I visited and this meant my presence could be very closely monitored by Mr L. and also by people working with him. Mr L.'s land abuts a local authority owned Gypsy site and he employs or works with people from the site.

The L.'s have created a very private space for themselves. The original lane to the house is marked by a couple of small signposts indicating the names of the houses and also a business name. The second lane looks to be nothing more than a gate leading onto farm fields though it is in fact the main business entrance. Until you have visited the site itself it is hard to imagine the scale of the warehouse facility that exists; none of the buildings are visible from any of the public roads. The site is very well connected with access onto one of the main south coast roads less than five minutes away and the local authority site is just a quick walk over the adjoining fields.

Greenfields

This site is situated close to the docks of a large city and is accessed by a very long, narrow bumpy lane that connects to the main A road servicing the docks. A number of small businesses and farms are also accessed from this lane, as well as one other Gypsy family who own land and trailers nearby. Mr CC.'s land is at the end of the lane. To reach Mr CC.'s trailer one turns down a gravel path into landscaped gardens past a very large, noisy tethered dog. There are two trailers both occupied by his family and also workshops for Mr CC.'s (double-glazing) business. It is a very private location, almost impossible to find without clear instructions or a guide, Mr CC. has not signposted the turn off onto his land for example. Whilst I visited, there was however, a steady stream of business visitors to see Mr CC. about work plans for the coming week.

4.5.2 Local Authority Sites

Docks Site

This is a large local authority site with about 18 pitches. All the families living on the site are related. The site is situated adjacent to the city docks and there are no immediate neighbours apart from the site warden who has a house by the entrance to the site, (although she does not occupy the house currently). Access is by following a concreted service road that turns off a nearby A road, used primarily by heavy industrial traffic headed to and from the docks. Apart from visiting the site there would be no reason to drive along the access lane. The site is entered through height restricting gates and the service road, which is a dead end, has pitches on each side before terminating at a small roundabout that allows vehicles to turn around. Apart from the trailers there is a small, single-storey community building. The site appears very crowded. Most pitches have one or two trailers or caravans on them and often a large storage container as well. There does not appear to be enough space for the number of vehicles associated with individual pitches; many families own vans or small trucks and these in particular do not appear well catered for. Vehicles seem to be used as part of an outdoor lifestyle for the men on the site in particular. On all my visits groups of men and boys would be sitting inside or standing around their vehicles talking to each other. The site appears run-down; the lane is very pot-holed and some of the trailers appear to be on their last legs. Everyone I spoke to mentioned the problem with rats on the site which was believed to stem from its closeness to the river and docks.

Hill Site

This site is almost a stereotype of a local authority choosing a grim location in order to house Gypsy families. The site is located just beyond the edge of the town and is accessed from the last roundabout on the town's by-pass system. To reach the site you turn off the roundabout onto a side road that, apart from the site, is only used to access the town's sewage works and amenity rubbish dump. There is a further turning that leads on to the site; this comprises of a disintegrating unmaintained road with pitches along one side and finishes in a dead end. There is space to park single file on the road and just allow other vehicles to pass. Both the rubbish dump and the sewage works are visible from the edge of the site. There are eight pitches with various different set-ups on each. One or two of the pitches have a single expensive trailer surrounded by outdoor furniture and plant pots. One or two of the pitches were crammed with two caravans and vehicles. One or two pitches were quite run-down and on one visit the contents of an entire pitch, (trailer and furniture and other goods), had been broken up and left as junk on the pitch. Four families have children who play together on the junction between the small site road and the main access road which carries traffic

to the sewage works and rubbish dump (mostly refuse lorries). There are problems with rats. There are no facilities on site except an outdoor block of toilets. The local authority has been promising to renovate the site for several years.

Cemetery Road site

This site is situated several miles outside of a small but busy rural town on the coast. As the name suggests the site is next to the town cemetery. Apart from the cemetery the site is surrounded by farmland and some light industrial sites (e.g. boat repair yards). It is a very quiet site with about 12 pitches. Most families live on the site with a single large trailer. There are lots of homemade road signs signalling drivers to restrict their speed because of children playing on the site. Compared to other sites there appeared to be more space; plenty of room for parking either outside trailers or on a gravelled, hardcore area at the entrance to the site. The site is discreetly signposted off a quiet B road that apart from the site, services the cemetery and other small industries.

Rife Site

This local authority site is situated just off the a main A road that links two substantial coastal towns and there is a nearby village (1 ½ miles) with several small shops and a pub. The site is bounded by the main road on one side and surrounded by farmland on all other sides. There are twelve pitches on the site about half of which are occupied by large static trailers and the others with one or two smaller mobile caravans per pitch. A number of families living on this site are related and some have connections to the L. family who live on privately owned land that runs adjacent to the site.

4.6 Dissimilarities between sites

Whilst the thrust of much of this chapter is to discuss some of the similarities that were apparent between different spaces occupied by Gypsy families, it is worth noting the many dissimilarities that also marked out different sites. In many ways such difference between sites is an obvious consequence of the different circumstances of families.

The relative wealth of different families had an immediate and obvious impact upon lifestyles. The three most apparently wealthy families had all established sites on privately owned land, generally providing

accommodation for two or three close family groups (e.g. two brothers and their immediate family). They all also owned adjoining land which was used for both leisure and business activities. This was in marked contrast to many of the less well-off families who, on both private and local authority sites, seemed to be crammed onto their pitches and suffered from a shortage of space. Whereas the close proximity of business activities to living space seemed more easily manageable on the larger private sites, similar arrangements on local authority sites tended to highlight the lack of space. So for example the lack of space for trucks or vans on some local authority sites, contributed to a sense of disorderliness and of chaotic living circumstances, particularly when these vehicles were occupied by men engaged in social activities, (i.e. chatting amongst themselves over a cigarette). The same sort of activities at Waterhouse for example lent themselves to a different interpretation; the extra space and rural calm lending itself to a sensation of men winding down from their daily labours. In other words similar activities are experienced differently on different sites, possibly related to the relative wealth of some landowners or the relative poverty of some local authority tenants.

The importance of land in terms of the dissimilarities associated with wealth was underlined by the E.'s slightly different lifestyle. Despite being in some financial difficulty they had retained a small part of their land and whilst their current temporary living arrangements were a little cramped, their remaining land, surrounded by paddocks and farmland felt particularly spacious. By contrast the claustrophobic setting of the Woodland site felt particularly oppressive; most of its residents appeared less well-off and there was a noticeable lack of communal activity outdoors.

Other dissimilarities included variations in communal/shared facilities. On all the private sites and many of the local authority sites there were no shared facilities and families provided all their domestic arrangements for themselves. On two of the local authority sites there were shared community spaces that were used particularly for activities around children's education. On some of the bigger sites the *Forest Bus*, a local authority education project based in a double-decker bus, made regular scheduled visits. Where there was a communal space it was often cited as being important in terms of providing community based activities; for example on the Docks site the availability of community space was one reason given for withdrawing children from school to be home educated. The space could be used to educate groups of children, (although as it happens this was not being implemented in practice). On other sites the lack of such a facility was highlighted as one reason why the community were unable to act on issues such as home education.

By and large though the dissimilarities that were most obvious were those that distinguished individuals from each other. Some sites were relatively untidy and others were kept immaculate, some pitches on the same site were untidy whilst their next door neighbour would have created an exotic flower display; some sites were heavily signposted with speed restrictions, (generally sites with small children playing outside), and other did not. Some families had dogs and some did not; of those who did have dogs some were very large and trained to ward off strangers and others were very small and sometimes annoying. One point about such dissimilarities is to flag up the context that Gypsy families, like many other families, are individuals and although the main point of this chapter is the discussion of similarities that follows, it can be too easy to suggest that as a group their lives are homogenous.

4.7 Similarities between sites

4.7.1 Distancing: the physical distance between sites and non-Gypsies

One of the most striking similarities between different sites was the relatively large distance between Gypsy sites and places occupied by non-Gypsies. All of the local authority sites associated with particular towns and cities were situated on the very edges of them. Often although the sites might fall within municipal boundaries they were positioned in places that were psychically beyond the town boundaries. The Docks site for example was located beyond the residential areas of the city adjacent to the Docks and surrounded by other industrial land. The Hill site was accessed off the last in a series of roundabouts leading out of the town, on to a small access road used to reach the sewage works and town's rubbish dump.

Similarly those sites in rural settings, (both local authority and privately owned), were situated at a considerable distance from other non-Gypsy neighbours. Driving to such rural sites often entailed following quite long-winded instructions about following small B roads and then looking for an unmarked or discreetly marked turn-off. On a number of occasions I was directed to a site by mobile phone conversation:

MM:	I'm back on Clay lane now?
Mr Y.:	No. You've gone wrong. Go back to the long bend, there's a sign. Look through the hedges you can see us just about.
MM:	I'm back at the bend. Can't see a sign though. I can see a trailer though.
Mr Y.:	There's a small sign...
MM:	Got it. It is quite small isn't it? I didn't think that was a turning it just looks like a path...

(Note of mobile phone conversation with Mr Y. whilst driving to Waterhouse.)

Visiting the Waterhouse site for the first time it was easy to miss its small, discreetly sign-posted entrance. From the main road there were few visible signs of the site's existence, even in the winter the density of the hedgerows made it hard to glimpse any signs of life. However, the small turn-off gave immediate access to a well-constructed and tarmacked driveway with ample space for turning lorries around and moving large, mobile trailers on and off the site. Mr Y.'s site was about a mile from a nearby village but he explained he rarely encountered any villagers apart from the occasional dog-walker in the surrounding fields. His land occupied a secluded position bounded in part by an A road and in part by fields and woodland.

Prior to visiting the Woodland site I discussed its location with TP, a field officer working for Hampshire Traveller Education Service. He had accompanied me on a number of visits to families in Hampshire as part of a project on which I was employed as a researcher. We discussed who exactly owned or rented the site,

MM: So it's a council site?

TP: No. It's private. There's some problems with (the city council).

MM: Oh right?

TP: It's the usual thing they don't have planning permission to be here. I think they've been given 12 months temporarily while it's sorted out.

MM: OK.

TP: Yeah. I don't know what the fuss is about really. It's perfectly placed. No one even knows they are here. You can't see them.

What was interesting was the description of the site's position as 'perfect' on the basis of its apparent invisibility to and from non-Gypsy neighbours. As previously discussed Woodland's positioning was very poor. Access was very difficult along a succession of narrow, poorly maintained B roads that cut through woodland before turning onto a narrow access road, (again badly maintained), that led round a sharp dog-leg on to site itself. Having reached the site it was impossible to turn vehicles around and there was a bare minimum of parking next to trailers that were situated in close proximity. There was no obvious reason for the site being situated where it was or for this patch of woodland to have been cleared of trees. TP's contention seemed to be that being hidden away from the rest of the world, was in itself, a plus point when allocating space to Gypsy families. (It should be noted TP was assigned a role in the TES following a staff reorganisation rather than having actively chosen to work for them. Unlike many other TES field workers he was less overtly sympathetic towards Gypsies though he was still a diligent and effective TES officer.)

4.7.2 Invisibility and the 'municipal register'

All the local authority sites appeared to be situated, so as to be invisible or near invisible from the main road and often very discreetly signposted. A casual visitor to the area was unlikely to stray onto the site and unlikely to be confronted by the lives of people living on the site. The Hill Site for example was accessed by a road that led off from a small but busy roundabout on the edge of town. The access road was distinguished by height restriction barriers and a heavy duty concreted road surface, there was no attempt at pedestrianisation and hedges along the road were poorly maintained. The only signposting referred to the road accessing the local amenity rubbish dump. All the other roads leading off the roundabout were tarmacked and fell within a visual register of suburban spaces and domesticity; signage referred to 'town centre' or local amenities such as 'leisure centres', manicured trees and shrubbery lined well maintained pedestrian pathways and carefully demarcated cycle paths. By contrast the Gypsy site visually fell within a *municipal register*, associated with lorries, commercial activity and waste disposal. A casual passer-by unsure of their whereabouts would instinctively understand which roads headed towards the town centre, its residential districts or the main access routes in and out of the town. Looking at the access road to the Gypsy site the instinctive understanding was this led to an area to be visited for commercial reasons (i.e. waste disposal). In this process a degree of invisibility is associated with the site. Within the daily life and movement of the town and its residents the Gypsy site does not register; it is unseen and unsignposted. The only occasions when the town's Gypsy site would become visible to its residents are when they specifically make a visit to the amenity waste site. Only the drivers of refuse trucks who travel back and forth between the town and the rubbish dump would be aware of the site's presence. Other more casual visitors taking an occasional car-load of garden waste to the dump, may or may not catch a glimpse of the small access road on to the site, and even if they do they will not see much of the condition of the site itself. Thinking about such casual visitors one can perhaps imagine the impact of a half-seen presence; the awareness of an alien existence beyond the town boundaries but one that is not registered amongst the visible experiences of daily life within the town. It recalls the liberal voice of Harper Lee; early in *To Kill A Mockingbird* (Lee 1960, 2006) Atticus Finch describes where the Ewell's, (the town's white trash family of disgrace), live to his daughter and promises her that

Some Christmas, when he was getting rid of the tree he would take me with him and show me where and how they lived. They were people, but they lived like animals. (2006:33)

Later Lee describes the journey in more detail outlining how it leads past the rubbish dump and beyond the Ewell's house to eventually reach the 'negro cabins' (264).

Lee suggests a twofold sense of distance one that registers an obvious physical distance and also a distance understood as the distinction between different types of lives (or lifestyles). This finds a parallel in the Hill Site and other local authority sites situated both physically distant, but also within space that appears in a different *municipal register*, related to commercial rather than domestic activities.

4.7.3 Invisibility and Privacy: fields of seclusion

In addition to being situated at a physical distance from non-Gypsies, many sites gave the impression of being hidden or of being very discreet about their existence. On local authority sites in part this related to the 'municipal register' of a site's surroundings described previously, but also this related to a more specific camouflaging of the site itself. On privately owned sites it often appeared a matter of choice to ensure privacy. All the sites operated to some degree within a field of seclusion; there was a deliberate situation of sites geographically and psychically beyond the boundary lines that marked out the spaces occupied by the non-Gypsy population.

It would be a mistake to consider the location of sites, 'on the edge of town' for example, as a wholly negative or problematic issue, particularly when considered in the context of local authority sites. The same sense of distance was apparent on private sites and was clearly related by respondents to the positive characteristics associated with such sites; they benefited by being secluded and ensuring the privacy of residents. In many cases, (not so much local authority sites), the distance from well-populated areas meant there was an abundance of space that could be used for leisure activities such as riding bikes, quad bikes or horses, or for large temporary swimming pools to be erected. In my field notes there is a recurrent usage of 'idyllic' to describe many of the rural settings of private sites. This idea of an 'idyllic' setting needs to be interrogated against my own personal biases and this was picked up by Mr L. when he discussed my own choice of location,

- MM: It's a good place though for your kids.
Mr L.: Too right. They can run around. Do what they want.
MM: So was that why you chose to live here?
Mr L.: Yeah. Yeah. But you know what its like? Why do you live in [village name]?
MM: Well you know its quiet....
Mr L.: Up your lane – really quiet. No one goes up there. You've got it to yourself.

MM: Well it's not that quiet but its good for the children they can ride up and down all day and there's no cars.
 Mr L.: So?
 MM: So it's quiet...
 Mr L.: [laughing] It's really quiet. Keep yourself to yourself.

The overriding factor that made many of the private sites positive places to live for the families was their privacy. Mr Y. repeatedly made the point that 'no one comes here'; the rural idyll that was being sought was not that of an imagined community of villagers, but rather a move beyond the spaces of village, town or city life. In some respects it was a distance from ideas of what constitutes rural idyllism.

The E.'s at New Meadow were first interviewed during a period of transition. Having been evicted from their house they were developing their own private land to provide accommodation. Their temporary arrangements at that time, (they were using a small static trailer and a storage container), reflecting the foundations of what they hoped would be a successful permanent base, despite not having planning permission for any development. In addition to substantial building plans for their land Mr E. had quickly planted 75 fir trees to increase the privacy of their land's boundaries. Discussing the likely response of their neighbours to their activity on the site, both Mr and Mrs E. adopted an optimistic approach hoping that somehow they would not be noticed:

MM: So what are your neighbours like?
 Mr E.: Don't know! We've never spoken to any of them!
 MM: So have they said anything? [We were talking about neighbours and their interest in the E's building plans.]
 Mrs E.: Hopefully none of them will notice or be that bothered. If none of them go to the council then they won't come round to check on us.

In principle the E.'s seemed to have avoided the interest of their neighbours as evidenced by the fact that their temporary trailer had not been visited by the local authority in the ten months they had been living there. During this same period West Sussex was conducting public consultations on the siting of new (private and local authority) sites in the county and associated with this was a groundswell of public and political antagonism towards new Gypsy sites. Whilst the E.'s remain unnoticed they seemed to enjoy a degree of privacy and a degree of distance from their local communities.

Shortly after they were initially interviewed the E.'s were required to apply for planning permission. At this stage they described how despite having fostered good relations with their immediate neighbours, these had been put under a strain once it was known they were Gypsies applying for planning permission. In particular they found themselves subjected to a wider and more hostile interest by neighbours throughout the neighbourhood (i.e. as opposed to next-door neighbours).

4.7.4 Transport Links

Despite their remoteness many sites were very well connected in terms of transport routes. In many respects for local authority sites this was a side-effect of their being positioned on the edge of town. Despite the often rudimentary local roads that led directly onto such sites, these usually fed back onto main A roads within 2 or 3 minutes driving. Around the larger towns access was often onto the main town ring-road or bypass. Unlike the majority of the town's residents the traffic problems associated with getting into or out of town were not an issue; instead there was usually very quick access on to the main through routes to and from other large towns or cities. Elsewhere local authority sites in rural areas or near smaller towns again were generally situated very close to the main transport links, either the main coastal roads or near to A roads used to access major towns and cities, London or Motorway networks. Privately owned sites followed a similar pattern; again despite their apparent isolation they were nearly all situated within a 5 minute drive to major A roads. Whilst local authority sites appeared to have generated this set of circumstances as an accidental by-product of positioning sites on the edge of town, the privately owned sites appeared to have been chosen in order to facilitate such access. For most of the families who worked the availability of transport links that effectively faced outwards, (i.e. away from the residential population), was very useful and facilitated much of their income generation.

Whilst often well-connected to major routes leading out of town, public transport links into the town were often very poor. Bus links were often located a mile or more away from sites, largely because apart from the Gypsy families on the site there were no other potential users of public transport in the vicinity. Many families were not affected by this as they relied on their own vehicles for transport. However, for a small but significant number of families it did cause problems; in particular these were poorer families living on local authority sites who may not have any regular income apart from state benefits and amongst such families mothers in particular were less likely to have access to their own cars.

MM: it seems quite isolated here. It's quite sort of –
 Mrs K.: We're right by the sea.
 MM: Yeah.
 Mrs K.: We're exactly right opposite [city name] docks.
 MM: Yes, the docks and you go in –
 Mrs K.: Yeah.
 MM: - and you carry on down you get –
 Mrs K.: - you go through that woods there –
 MM: Yeah.
 Mrs K.: - and you're in the water and the sea.

The respondent was describing the Docks Site where there are no local amenities. The nearest village had a small pub but no shops. As indicated by Mrs K. the land the site was built on adjoined the back of the docks. The A road that gave access to the locality of the site was a spur road off the local motorway network that followed the path of the river out along to the coast. In this area there were only a small number of other residents. The A road was mainly used by traffic accessing the docks and other commercial concerns (primarily farms). It was necessary to drive four or five miles to reach a satellite town/suburb of the city with supermarkets and other major shops, one mother complained about the difficulties the location caused

I don't have a car so either he [the respondent's husband] drives me to Tesco or wherever or I get someone else to. Or I don't go out. (Mrs K.)

As the mother quoted above suggested the lack of transport to and from the site was a source of isolation and it also caused practical difficulties. There was a longstanding dispute about how children from the site were supposed to travel to the local schools with families suggesting it was unsafe for children to navigate to and from a bus stop on the busy A Roads servicing the docks.

4.7.5 Visibility/Invisibility

The Docks Site is about a mile and a half walk to the main road where there were bus links but these were not being used by the site residents. Mrs K. and Mrs T. discussed the location of the site:

Mrs K.: [The site is] Out of the way.
 MM: Yeah.
 Mrs K.: And even people that live local don't know we're here.
 MM: Don't know you're here. Yes, that's interesting isn't it?
 Mrs T.: I'll tell you what they're treating us like, they are treating us like the Jews – a couple of years ago – the Jews. They need to put them in –
 Mrs K.: My Mum won't even come on here because – my Mum said you know we've got this fencing all the way round us, she said it's like a concentration camp.
 Mrs T.: That's right, and they put the Jews years ago.
 MM: It makes a boundary between where you are and everybody else?

Mrs K.: This is why they put us in prison.

The comparisons with the prison were interesting and borne out by the experience of visiting the site.

Driving on to the site one passes through a narrow entrance with high fences on either side and underneath a height restriction barrier. After this the road passes the site warden's bungalow which is securely fenced off from the rest of the site and surrounded by CCTV cameras. The road then leads into the site itself; a single road with pitches along each side and finishing in a small roundabout on which to turn vehicles around.

From the road it is not possible to see the fences that surround the site, however if you stray a little way from the road, or take a look outwards from the back of the trailers it is easy enough to see the boundary lines of the site marked out by 6 foot fences. Residents spoke of the councils desire (which they resisted) to extend CCTV coverage beyond the site warden's bungalow on to the site proper. They also spoke of the regular visits by local police who would drive slowly onto the site down the road, round the roundabout and back again. Both the level of surveillance around the site that and a general sense of enclosure would not be considered normal for non-Gypsy residential accommodation. This suggests a strange sense of ambiguity; on the one hand the site and its residents were invisible, they were tucked away out of sight and beyond the worlds of their neighbours; but on the other hand, they were very visible and physically constrained. The site warden's bungalow was situated in such a place that all comings and goings could be watched by the warden, activity on the site was restricted by fencing and barriers, and, there was a degree of intrusion by CCTV cameras. The fences and surveillance allied with the poor transport links made it unsurprising that residents should feel they were being imprisoned within the site boundaries.

The ambiguity that is suggested by making sites that seem both highly visible and invisible ties up in some part with the earlier discussion of why local authority sites are situated on the edge of town; where they can only be half-glimpsed on the edge of municipal consciousness. As it happens the Docks site was not adjacent to the local rubbish dump so would not be seen by local residents carrying out infrequent visits to the city borders. Awareness of its existence would however be restricted to people travelling to the outer edges of the city; to the back side of the docks. With the local authority sites in particular this seems a commonplace set of circumstances; sites are just visible and mark out the physical boundaries of municipal jurisdiction. If in Harper Lee's novel the Ewell's residence marks the furthest boundary of white residents, with only black people living any further out of town; in west Sussex and Hampshire local authority sites seem to demarcate the boundaries of what is considered habitable.

4.7.6 Family and other networks

Many of the sites, both local authority and privately run, were associated with particular extended families. So for example on the Docks Site all the families living on the site were related in some degree. Similarly all but one of the private sites was established to provide accommodation for generally closely related groups of families.

The importance of knowing who was living on a site was repeatedly stressed in all the interviews:

- Mr D.: I know everyone. Don't like all of them but I know who they are. I even know you, knew you were coming. So when you drive up here everyone knows who you are.
- MM: Ok. What if I just appeared here today...would...
- Mr D.: I'd want to know...know what you were up to
- MM: But what
- Mr D.: And so would he. (Indicates man working outside another trailer). That's my cousin.

The importance of a close geographical family also emerged in terms of the mutual support families could offer each other. Mrs K. and Mrs T. described life on the Docks Site,

- MM: So what sort of place is it to live?
- Mrs K.: It's good.
- Mrs T.: We've all got kids. So it's nice we can all chat and have a laugh. The kids all look out for each other.
- MM: And what about the different families on the site
- Mrs K.: We're all related..
- MM: Are you?
- Mrs T.: She's my sister...
- MM: I didn't know that...sorry about that
- Mrs T.: Yeah we're all related. All know each other.

Beyond the family network within sites there were also connections that spread beyond particular sites.

Whilst conducting the interviews it was often the case that I would be asked who I knew on a particular site or elsewhere and this process of becoming known played an important part to ensure my credentials prior and during interviews. The following discussion took place with Mr Y.,

- Mr Y.: So you working with Traveller Education still?
- MM: Well I finished the project for Sussex but I'm doing another one in Hampshire now.
- Mr Y.: Who's that for?
- MM: [Mentions some names at Hampshire TES] and ST [Gypsy member of the TES]
- Mr Y.: Oh you know ST? Do you know his brother?
- MM: No...

Mr Y.: Well you know ST [mimics size of ST's girth]
MM: He is a big lad....
Mr Y.: Well his brother's like that but tall...
MM: So how do you know ST?
Mr Y.: R's [Mrs Y's] cousin. Known them all years. When his dad had a few problems, this is years back, we used to have a garage in [name of town]. We did his van up, got him back on the road again, didn't charge him...

Throughout the research it was apparent that connections existed between and amongst families, however, more importantly was the acknowledgement of these connections. Respondents situated themselves constantly within the framework of these networks.

4.8 Families who were housed

Two-thirds of the families in this research lived on local authority or private sites, whilst a substantial minority, (10 families, 28.1% of the total), were living in housing stock. With one exception all the families who lived in housing as opposed to on a site did so within either local authority or housing association housing. The exception were the L's who lived in bricks and mortar houses but situated on their own land; the Old Farm site discussed previously. In many ways their accommodation was physically different from all other respondents, but seemed to fit closer to the pattern of other families living on sites.

Whilst families living on sites reflected a wide range of circumstances those living in housing stock appeared to be generally amongst the less affluent respondents. With the exception of the L.'s who appeared overtly prosperous, many housed respondents appeared extremely poor and living close to the breadline. Most of these families were reliant on state welfare benefits for their income.

4.8.1 Some Thumbnail Sketches of respondents' houses

A number of housed respondents preferred not to conduct interviews in their houses so this section is not an exhaustive account.

The F.'s

The F.'s live on a very run-down council estate that appeared in need of investment. All the houses looked in need of repainting, roads were badly potholed and signage and fences needed graffiti to be removed. The F.'s was the last house on a small cul-de-sac reached through a rabbit warren of small roads. The house appeared run down from the outside with a smashed window above the door temporarily boarded up and lots of old unused children's toys in the garden. The F.'s house was literally overlooked by a gasometer. Inside the house was also in poor condition with kitchen units almost falling apart.

The B.'s

This family were living in a ground floor council flat on an estate on the outskirts of a small seaside town. This estate consists of dilapidated 1970's housing stock and about 1 in 4 of the homes have been boarded up by the local authority. Almost all the garages on the estate have seen their doors smashed in and the walkways, communal areas and garages are covered in graffiti. The local authority's longstanding plans to demolish these flats seem to have a low priority compared to their plans to develop and enhance the seafront. Inside the B.'s flat was neat and tidy but there were obvious signs of necessary maintenance work being long overdue, (e.g. badly corroded Crittal windows and problems with damp).

Mrs A.

Mrs A. was renting a small new house from a local housing association. Her house was situated in a small *cul-de-sac* on a new build suburban estate consisting of mixed social and privately owned housing. The estate was part of a large redevelopment of land on the outskirts of a small coastal town. Mrs A. described the location as 'very quiet, you can hear the birds singing in the morning' and suggested it was a good place to live. Describing how 'she kept herself to herself' Mrs A. said she had spoken to her neighbours but wouldn't generally visit their houses or invite them into hers. The only person's house she had visited was a neighbour 3 or 4 doors away who claimed to be from a Gypsy background.

The S.'s

The S.'s lived on a large 1960/1970's council estate; this appeared quiet and well maintained. The interview with Mrs S was conducted in nearby café so as not to disturb her husband. I met Mr S. briefly whilst he was loading work tools into a truck outside their house on his way to work. Both Mr and Mrs S. agreed it was an 'ok area' but noted the police were an intrusive element in their lives. The police regularly patrolled the local playgrounds looking for truants and kept picking up one of their sons who did not have a school place.

The EE. 's

The EE.'s lived in a housing association house in a quiet 1990's suburban estate on the outskirts of a major town. This was in an area of mostly privately owned housing in which the housing association had acquired a number of properties. The EE's house was well maintained. Mrs EE. noted it was a very quiet area and that she preferred living here to other places. However, she also said she avoided her neighbours and indicated that she felt there was a problem with some neighbours who knew she was a Gypsy.

4.8.2 Housed Respondents

There were less obvious conclusions to draw from housed respondents. Whilst a number seemed to have been housed inadequately, this was also true of many of their non-Gypsy neighbours. Unlike local authority owned sites it was not the case that social housing reflected a specific response to Gypsy housing needs; lots of different people from different backgrounds lived in comparable accommodation. A similar sense of living in marginal spaces arose on a number of occasions, intensified by the experience of trying to track down a respondent's address on inadequately signposted, rabbit warren estates. It's a subjective judgement to make but the F.'s seemed to live on the worst estate in the whole town, on the worst road on that estate, in the worst house on that road sitting in the absolute shadow of a gasometer, (nobody else actually lived under the gasometer). Similarly the T. family lived right at the end of a dilapidated line of council flats about a third of which were deserted and boarded up. It would be too easy to suggest the EE.'s and the T.'s were housed where they were because of their ethnicity, but neither family suggested this was the case. It seems more probable their housing was determined by the vagaries of being poor and relying on the state, (like other poor non-Gypsy families).

Many of the families spoke about their connections to other families living on sites or in housing. There was a fairly mixed response about what was felt about their current houses; generally those who were in better quality housing wanted to remain where they were, whilst those in very poor housing were often desperate to get out. Mrs A. for example stressed how happy she was living in a quiet suburban village; she gave the impression that having the house offered her a degree of comfort and stability that she valued greatly.

The F.'s and the T.'s were most anxious to get away from their respective houses and both families seemed least likely to manage such a move. Mr F. was quite desperate when describing his preference to live on a quiet piece of land in the middle of the countryside with no neighbours; a description that bore a great deal of similarity to the sites developed on private land by other families in the research. Reflecting on his current home Mr F. suggested he would prefer to move back on to the Hill Site, despite being acutely aware of problems associated with the site. Realistically the F.'s seemed unlikely to move; the family are reliant on state benefits and Mr F. has no income or likelihood of generating income in the near future. The T.'s described being fed up with living on their estate; it was dirty and noisy and they experienced problems with their neighbours and low level criminality, (Mrs T. warned me not to park my car on the estate but to leave it in the nearby Aldi car park). The T.'s seemed resigned to living on the estate until the local council decided to demolish the estate at which point they hoped to move into better quality housing association accommodation

4.9 Conclusions

All the sites discussed were organised, unsurprisingly, around the particular requirements of inhabitant's lifestyles. One aspect that distinguished sites from non-Gypsy housing was the proximity between work and leisure; many respondents were self-employed and the vehicles and workshops associated with work, were often located close to the home. In many instances it was difficult to draw a distinguishing line between the working environment and the home life. On local authority sites this impression was often heightened by the lack of space afforded individual families; however, even on private sites with large amounts of space available, elements of the working world were always close to hand. Another distinction from the non-Gypsy world was the openness with which sites seemed to be laid out; despite valuing privacy between the site and the outside world; on the site everything seemed to be on display. Neighbours knew their neighbours well, (often they were related), but also they could see what activities they were involved in on a day to day basis. This knowledge of their neighbours was regularly described in terms of 'community' and closely allied to ideas of safety on the site.

The placement of local authority sites on the margins of towns and villages seems to demarcate understandings of belonging and not belonging. Despite such placement these 'sites' were never wholly invisible to non-Gypsies. They were hidden away, but could often be partially seen by non-Gypsies under

particular circumstances, such as trips to the local rubbish dump or by people engaged in particular working routines, (e.g. Bin-men, dockers, farmers or police). Rather than being purely invisible they were *barely visible*, markers of physical boundaries, (something like marker buoys at sea; generally to be avoided and only occasionally seen at close hand due to adverse weather conditions). Gypsy sites mark the edges of town, the edges of municipal responsibilities and by demarcating who does and does not belong, the edge of nationhood.

A comparison with private sites is interesting because it brings to the fore the sense of privacy that is valued when Gypsy families develop their own land. As discussed, such privacy blocks out the non-Gypsy world by removing the site as far from view as possible, (in contrast to the openness and lack of privacy on the site). As with local authority sites this invisibility is never quite as total as might be desired; there are always moments of specific contact such as the need to engage with planning officers. Again there is a sense of the construction of the boundary or the limits of the non-Gypsy world and a sense of sites being places that hover on the edge of this world. All the respondents I spoke to noted their engagement with the non-Gypsy world in hundreds of different ways, from the television programmes they watched to the weekly shop at Tesco; the physical situation of sites however, often felt like an attempt to distance family life from those worlds.

The similarity of the distancing effect of local authority and private sites also begins to suggest a negotiated boundary line between Gypsies and non-Gypsies; one that both parties in part subscribe to. Such distancing is freighted with an ambiguity that infuses the relationship between the Gypsy and non-Gypsy world. Gypsy lives play out amongst the commonalities of non-Gypsy lives and *vice versa*: both watch the same TV shows, shop in the same supermarkets and even share the same weather. More tangibly important issues such as earning an income almost always require Gypsies to trade or provide services to non-Gypsies. The 'site' was the physical manifestation of the connections/disconnections between Gypsy and non-Gypsy world; on the one hand they were near invisible to the outside world but on the other they were easily and carefully linked into the transport routes needed to support work. The physical space of sites was critical to almost all families' economic work. The invisibility that was invested in local authority sites seemed to reflect the municipal understanding, the investment made in places and spaces by local electorates and local party politics in which there is a clear desire to keep Gypsy communities at a distance from the rest of the population.

The impression that Gypsy sites though marginalised and distanced are never fully hidden away suggests they occupy a complicated role in non-Gypsy lives.

The stereotypical fears of local communities that Gypsies are liable to law-breaking and disorder potentially explains the need to keep sites half-glimpsed or under surveillance. However, it is not the whole story there are also the less frequent romanticised stereotypes extolling the simpler, exoticised, back-to-nature accounts of Gypsy lives.

If their closeness to the world is distanced and made near invisible, it is the closeness and the half-glimpsed visibility that provides an insight into the ambiguities in the relationship the non-Gypsy world understands to exist with Gypsies. Although they are pushed to the edges of the non-Gypsy world this is possibly a hugely important place to occupy; physically it is the symbolic space that marks out a real (rather than imagined) boundary between the municipality/town/village/nation and everything outside. Such boundary formation shapes Gypsy identity by situating Gypsies in relation to the boundaries of the nation. Local authority sites in particular represent the physicality of boundaries related to the wider population of Gypsies. Physical materialisations of boundaries that demarcate communities and nations are unusual occurrences in daily life; encountered only as the walls of prisons and asylum centres, or as the literal border crossings, experienced when travelling to another country. The importance of such boundary formation for the population is to act as a reminder of who they are, where they come from and how far they can stray.

Chapter 5 Work and Income

5.1 Introduction

The majority of respondents described a patriarchal arrangement in which men were expected to generate income in order to support women who were responsible for domestic responsibilities and looking after small children. Within these descriptions women remained at home whilst men left the home in order to work. Most families looked to generate income through self-employment rather than permanently working for another employer. Work was often seen in terms of being a family business with sons generally being expected to follow their father's lead and work with them. The findings suggest that in general family members described working patterns that concurred with earlier research about Gypsy lives, in which gendered roles were clearly delineated, encouraged and reinforced from early childhood onwards (Smith, 1997). Okely (1983) and Kendall (1997) both describe gendered roles that are specifically taught through a relationship between Gypsies and their 'homeplace'.

However, beyond this initial account many family members described exceptions to traditional patriarchal regimes. In some cases this reflected a change of circumstances beyond the participant's control, such as long-term unemployment resulting in a family becoming reliant upon state support, or changing economic conditions leading to different expectations of gender roles, (e.g. girls going to work). In many cases there was also a simple discrepancy between the accounts given of the working practices of Gypsies generally and the accounts given of a family's actual circumstances. For example, a family like that of Mrs T.'s described a traditional patriarchal structure despite clear evidence that the mother, (who had a permanent job as a Community Development Worker), was the main breadwinner. Whilst in some respects this would suggest a clash between an idealised version of how life should be lived, and the day-to-day realities of earning enough money to put food on the table, such an analysis is slightly wide of the mark. Firstly there is wider evidence that suggests Gypsies in the UK and Europe have always adapted to changing or difficult economic conditions (Levinson and Sparkes, 2004; Casa-Nova, 2007; Smith and Greenfields, 2012). Secondly many of the accounts heard during this research underlined the whole family's participation within income generation but were still retold in terms of an idealised, patriarchal account. That there should be a discrepancy between accounts given of who works, when and for how long is unsurprising, and is a

phenomenon not confined to Gypsy families. Bianchi *et al* (2007) for example discuss in detail the discrepancies between families' perceptions of gendered difference and changing patterns of domestic life, as opposed to the realities of their lives and also the differences that are apparent in terms of wider media accounts within American middle class families.

For the Gypsy families in this study income generation and the future economic stability of children was a very important concern in their family lives. Smart notes how the, 'values that people hold about family life' are 'extremely complex and also flexible and contextual' (Smart 2005:553); this seems particularly the case for Gypsy families discussing work. When discussing work, respondents described the complexities not just of their everyday living arrangements, but also wider meanings about their family and relationships to other (Gypsy) families and to non-Gypsies with whom they might engage economically. Often these accounts were built around many interconnected themes including gender, space and family relations; Levinson and Sparkes (2004) describe tensions that encompass all of these following changes to local authority site rules. Respondents like Mr Y. directly related his 'Gypsiness' to his ability to provide for his family. Many families noted the need to balance work flexibly around lifestyles. In addition many also identified the importance of ensuring their children would be able to support themselves independently in the future.

Such multi-layered accounts acknowledged, and often moved easily between, both the idealised versions of what constituted a Gypsy family and distinct accounts of their own family life. Accounts that highlight difference between the understandings of what family life is like and the reality of what happens within families is not unique to Gypsies (see Gillis, 1996, Smart, 2005). This chapter will consider the different types of employment and income generation of respondents; it will examine their perceptions of employment; and, will discuss this within the context of family identity.

5.2 Work, unemployment and income

Of the 32 families interviewed the majority worked in order to generate income, whilst a significant minority were reliant on benefit payments:

	Families	%
Working	17	53%
Reliant on benefit	12	38%
Retired (and not working)	1	3%
Unknown	2	6%

Table 5.1 Main Family Income

Not all of these categories provide an exact account of individuals or family circumstances. Mr B. for example described himself as a dealer in scrap metal and repeatedly referred to the importance of a working routine that could be adapted around his family commitments and lifestyle choices. He also stated that there was no work available to him at the present time. Mrs B. suggested that the family relied on benefits for their income and Mr B. agreed with this. The B.'s have been included within the category 'Working' as in their interview it seemed apparent that Mr B. was engaged in working patterns that, although irregular, still generated income. There was a clear suggestion from both Mr and Mrs B. that they were both claiming benefit related to Mr B.'s official unemployed status and, at the same time, he was also self-employed. In this respect claiming benefit was treated as another form of work, (this mirrored the responses of other families interviewed during the research), with little or no distinction made by respondents between 'work' and 'income'. In this sense work was directly related to all income generating endeavours. Many families who were wholly reliant on benefit made a direct equivalence between the idea of 'work' and the idea of 'income'; that is to say when asked what they did for a living they would explain that they claimed benefit payments. Mr F. who was reliant on benefit also described how old Gypsy trades were being lost, in part because schools did not educate Gypsy children to continue such traditional work; and, in this discussion he included 'begging' as a trade or a work practice. Mr F.'s thoughts are examined more closely in the following chapter; however, it is worth noting his and other respondents' wide-ranging understandings of what constituted work; in principle many respondents made little or no distinction between traditionally defined work activities (e.g. building work), activities that might generally be considered to be not working (e.g. being out of work and reliant upon benefit payments), and activities traditionally regarded as being the mark of someone who was not working (e.g. begging). A similarly broad-brush approach was also apparent in some respondents' accounts of the different types of work they might choose to do; often little distinction was applied to the quality or type of work, (see Mr Y.'s account below of his many activities). In principle work was any activity that generated income and its importance was primarily that it should generate income which would fund the respondent's lifestyle.

5.3 Types of work and sources of income

Many respondents who described themselves as working discussed multiple sources of income rather than just identifying one means of generating income. The following is a list of all the different types of work and sources of income identified by respondents (27 in total):

Antique shop	Building contractor
Building work	Buy & sell antiques/pictures
Cars	Community Development Officer
Decorator	Double glazing
Driveways	Fairground Travellers
Fencing	Fork-lift sales
Gypsy fair/horse show projects	Horses
Import/export	Landscape gardening
Motorway maintenance	Patios
Roads/tarmacking	School fees for promoting Gypsy way of life in primary schools
Scrap metal	State benefits
Supermarket job	'Traditional' Gypsy work
Tree surgeon	Xmas trees
Other	

Table 5.2 Different Sources of Income

It is noticeable that despite the apparent diversity in this list, most types of work are self-employed options for generating income, often governed by short-term contracts or daily negotiated rates of pay. Only three types of work identified, (state benefits, Community Development Officer & supermarket job), specifically related to contracted work forms. Amongst the other types of work listed some could be contracted, (e.g. working as a builder contracted to a building firm and paid a monthly salary), however, amongst respondents these types of work were invariably negotiated on the basis of a daily rate rather than on a salary or a longer form of sub-contract.

Choices such as working in a supermarket were relatively uncommon, (one mother worked regularly in a local store and another 15 year old girl had a Saturday job at a large John Lewis store in a nearby town). Similarly only one person who was interviewed worked within local government and that was as a Community Development Officer on a project that was related to providing education and day-care for pre-school Gypsy children. More generally there was a clear preference for working arrangements that were self-managed or which could be terminated abruptly.

Table 5.3 details families by their primary source of income:

Primary income for family	Number of families	%
Unemployed/Reliant on Benefit	12	38%
Building Work (including Motorway/road Tarmacking, driveways and patios)	4	13%
Scrap metal dealing	2	6%
Tree Surgery, Landscape gardening	2	6%
Double Glazing	2	6%
Antique Shop	1	3%
Car dealer	1	3%
Community Development Officer	1	3%
Fairground	1	3%
Fencing	1	3%
Fork Lift Truck sales	1	3%
Horses	1	3%
Retired	1	3%
Unknown	2	6%
Total	32	

Table 5.3 Families by primary source of income

The definitions of the types of work were based on respondents' own descriptions and it was clear that within these different categories there was a degree of crossover between categories. In addition some descriptions did not entirely describe the full remit or scope of a type of work. Describing himself as a 'builder' for example Mr Y. explained his wider interests in securing larger projects that he would manage and sub-contract to other people, i.e. he described the working practices of a 'building contractor', (the scale of the operations he managed far exceeded a basic understanding of being just a builder). Mr Y. also described how he himself would personally work as a builder on smaller building projects, (generally with other family members), in these instances having secured a piece of work he would personally be responsible not just for the management of a project but also the daily physical work of being a 'builder'. Finally Mr Y. also explained his willingness to work 'on the shovel' if that was the only work available to him. By 'on the shovel', Mr Y. meant he would spend a day doing the most basic labouring task on another builder's projects. For Mr Y. the important aspect of work was to generate income to fund his lifestyle and in this respect if he was unable to generate work himself he would find someone else who did have work available. Mr Y. distinguished between work he might prefer to be doing, managing a more profitable contract/project for example, but did not see this as a reason to debar himself from less attractive working options or less profitable options. The most significant reason to work was to maintain a steady income; Mr

Y. suggested the importance of work for him was to generate daily or weekly income, rather than a sense of status that might be associated with a particular type of work. That said Mr Y. was a well-known figure amongst Gypsy communities on the south coast, who had considerable status related to his commercial and personal success. It should also be noted that Mr Y. maintained a wide portfolio of income streams beyond just building work. When asked what he did for a living however, he summed it up simply as 'builder'.

The agglomeration of diverse income streams was typical of many of the families interviewed, Appendix 1 details primary and additional income streams including families reliant on benefit payments. Appendix 1 underlines how income although often defined as dependant on traditional, male generated types of work was often pooled from a wider net of income sources. As already discussed 12 families relied predominantly upon benefit payments from the state. Of these, 11 families included an adult female member, (one family consisted of a single father and his two children). Generally benefit payments, (housing benefit, child tax credits, council tax benefit etc.), are calculated on the basis of 'family resources', that is to say the amount of benefit paid is related to the needs of the whole family and not to individual members of the family (see DWP 2006). Such income therefore relates to a whole family endeavour as opposed to just relating to the father of a family or an individual wage-earner within the family.

10 families generated income from multiple types of work and in addition 4 families generated income from both work and benefit payments (see table 7.4)

	Family	Number	%
Benefit Only	A,F,H,K,N,O,Q,X,EE	9	28%
Working + Benefit	B,T,U,V	4	13%
Working only (1 source of income)	I,J,P,R,Z,DD	6	19%
Working only (2 or more sources of income)	D,E,G,L,M,S,W,Y,CC,FF	10	31%
Retired	BB	1	3%
Unknown	C,AA	2	6%

Table 5.4 Family Income: single and multiple streams

5.4 Work and Gender

Gender played an important role in defining household responsibilities. Generally it was the male partner who was the main breadwinner in families who were working, (in only one case was the female partner the main breadwinner). Women's role in family life tended to be presented as that of housewife with responsibility for the home and the children. As previously discussed in addition to primary sources of income many families were involved in other income generating enterprises, often as a family business and in these cases it was not just the male partner who worked, but often the whole family including female family members. Many families relied on benefit payments as their main source of income, such income being assessed on the basis of the needs of the family.

	Number	%
Primary income generated by male	18	56%
Primary income generated by female	1	3%
Primary income benefit payments (family)	11	34%
Retired	1	3%
Unknown	1	3%

Table 5.5 Primary Income source by gender

Table 5.5 shows income source by gender. Eight women, from 7 different families, worked and generated income of the 17 families categorised as working. If all families are considered then women were directly related to income in 18 of the 32 families interviewed (7 families with women working and 11 families claiming benefit with female members). Within the categories in table 5.5 there is a wide differentiation between individual roles.

Main Breadwinner	A	1
Participated in Family Business ('secondary' Status to male breadwinner)	E, L, W, Y, DD	5
Other Job (not main Breadwinner)	W, FF	2

Table 5.6 Female Income Generation Roles

Amongst those participating in the wider family business some had very specific roles. Mrs E. for example worked as a painter and decorator on building projects that Mr E. was working on and Mrs DD. had specific roles within the working routines of the family's fairground business. In both cases the wives' work was important, but it followed and was supplemental to the husband's work. Mrs E. for example did not work independently as a decorator; rather she worked on projects that Mr E. secured and entailed a decorating element within them. Both Mrs E. and Mrs DD. conducted their working lives in addition to maintaining the family roles of mother and housekeeper. A comparison of the working lives of the E.'s and the DD.'s is interesting because it also highlights the differences between 'traditional' and 'non-traditional' male roles. Whilst Mr DD. left all domestic duties to his wife, Mr E. explained how many domestic tasks were shared including cooking and childcare, (though not, and this appeared to be at the insistence of Mrs E., the cleaning tasks). The E.'s were particularly proud that, unlike many parents at their local school, they would both escort their children to the school gates. They felt this demonstrated their successful approach to life generally; the family came first and work and other routines were managed around this. In some respects this mirrored a traditional approach to work in which income generation is adapted to family life (Cemlyn et al, 2009); this was a pattern often adopted by other respondents in the research. However, it was also non-traditional for Mr E. as a male partner to adopt such a hands-on approach to the domestic role by taking the children to school most days either accompanying his wife or on his own.

Unlike the E.'s and DD.'s, Mrs Y. held a slightly less defined role within the family business, though one that acknowledged she would participate in certain activities at certain times, (e.g. picking holly and wreathes with the whole family at Christmas time); in this respect Mrs Y.'s homemaker role was more clearly foregrounded as being her most important role within the family. Within other families jobs varied in importance; the W.'s daughter's Saturday job at John Lewis was regarded as important by the family despite constituting only a small part of her and the family's income. The W.'s overtly and volubly praised the 'get-up-and-go' attitude of their daughter in this and in other income generating respects. They highlighted the job's value in terms of demonstrating her personal qualities, including her successful attributes as a 'Gypsy', despite the 'non-traditional' nature of working in a shop. Both parents stressed their satisfaction that she 'could look after herself' and 'support herself'. In the case of Mrs FF. however, it was clear that her supermarket job was hugely more significant to the family's overall income, because it was continuous throughout the year, whilst Mr FF.'s income as a landscape gardener was seasonal and unpredictable. Despite this, when asked about how they supported themselves Mrs FF. referred solely to her husband's work and her supermarket job was only mentioned in passing later in the interview.

There are well-established gendered roles within Gypsy families. Men act as bread-winners and women stay at home looking after children and maintaining the household, but quite often these arrangements can be more complicated. Okely (1983) notes the various contradictions that persist in Gypsy women being subordinated within a set of values that both privileges male family members and circumscribes the activities of women, (in particular their contact with other men), but at the same time celebrates their activities to generate income generally from non-Gypsies. Most recently the Channel 4 slice of life documentary *My Big Fat Gypsy Wedding* presented young Irish Traveller women explaining the importance of marrying a man who could support his family whilst they remained at home. Helleiner (1997) provides a convincing account of the marginalisation, to the point of almost being rendered invisible, of Irish Traveller women throughout the 19th and 20th centuries, both through intra-community discourses, and also through the wider discourse of Gypsy and Traveller communities being understood from a masculinized perspective. Despite the public stance of men being expected to support their families, women and men are both expected to contribute to the family income by performing different, gender appropriate work. Gypsy and Traveller women are more likely to stay inside the home, caring for children and older people, whilst men occupy a more visible role, moving between the home and the outside world and, where employment opportunities exist, engaging in physical work such as trading their skills or selling their labour. (Cemlyn et al, 2009: 227)

Greenfields (2006) also notes how changing economic circumstances have impacted on Gypsy women, steering them into the world of work and undertaking training in skills that can be used to provide a regular income for the family, (for example, young women attending hairdressing courses, obtaining shop work, cleaning jobs or returning to education to learn IT). The fundamental change in women's employment therefore, (for those with the security to take advantage of such opportunities), appears to involve moving away from working within the family group, into the role of employee.

Similar patterns were evident in this research. The role of men as primary breadwinners engaged in physical 'traditional' work was regularly cited by respondents. However, families also discussed the roles of wider family members, (women and children), and what often emerged was a more rounded account in which families worked together to generate income, or in which there was an acknowledgement that children may generate income in different ways in the future.

In addition clear instances emerged when despite a public face in which the primacy of the male breadwinner was always presented there was clear evidence of wider familial participation in different aspects of income generation. Mr Y. for example talked volubly about his relationship with his wife as an example of a traditional Gypsy marriage. As the man of the house he was expected to put food on the table and provide for his family's needs. He explained how he could 'spend my day how I want. Total freedom', as long as on a Friday he passed 'the Tesco test'; that is to say on a Friday his wife would do the weekly shop at Tesco and Mr Y. would have the cash in hand to pay for their groceries. This description of his circumstances masked two significant aspects of his life, one acknowledged and the other not acknowledged. Firstly Mr Y. was determined that his daughter should succeed in her education to the point that she successfully completed GCSEs. He explicitly made clear that this was because he wanted to ensure his daughter was qualified to apply for jobs, (including shop work), that would require basic paper qualifications. He also explicitly wanted to ensure his daughter could support herself in the future and not be reliant on a husband to generate income. He worked hard to ensure his daughter would not be constrained in the future by traditional Gypsy gender roles. What Mr Y. never acknowledged however, but was apparent to even a casual observer, was that Mrs Y. was also active within the family work to a greater extent than either Mr or Mrs Y. outlined in conversation. (As discussed earlier the extent of Mrs Y.'s work input was described as joining in with family holiday/business activities such as picking holly.) Meeting Mr Y. on different occasions both in his home, at my home and at social and commercial gatherings, there was a clear discrepancy between his stated explanation that he did the work and earned the income and his wife stayed at home looking after the household. Mrs Y. and their daughter both worked within the family business. Mrs Y. in particular was seen to be organising and very active in a Gypsy antique fair that the family operated. Although Mr Y. was clearly the main breadwinner, Mrs Y. contributed income to a greater extent than was acknowledged.

This research undoubtedly confirms an overall pattern in which women remain at home and men go to work. It also supports evidence suggesting that these patterns are changing; some women engaging in work patterns more commonly associated with male Gypsy roles. Furthermore there is a growing expectation that daughters may well engage in more non-traditional roles in the future. A shift from traditional and patriarchal working patterns, to a situation in which women engage in non-traditional roles has a complex impact on the relationship between Gypsy and non-Gypsy families. Some members of Gypsy families may find themselves moving closer or further away from parts of the non-Gypsy world as a consequence of shifting gender roles. In addition an increasing reliance on benefits, can result in a shift in the types of

contacts experienced between Gypsy men and the non-Gypsy world. Whilst Gypsy men might increasingly have contact with the state in relation to benefit claims; their work contacts are reduced. This is possibly indicative of a general diminishment in contact between Gypsy men and the non-Gypsy world. At the same time a family's reliance on benefits increases or confirms the contact of Gypsy women with the non-Gypsy world, also through benefit claims. Equally the requirement for education, particularly for daughters who might require qualifications in order to gain future employment demonstrates women's roles moving away from the state towards working arrangements in which there is a greater degree of contact between Gypsy women and the non-Gypsy world.

5.5 Attitudes to Work and Family Life

There is a substantial body of evidence that characterises Gypsy work patterns in the UK with a preference for self-employment rather than waged employment, and stresses the need for flexibility on a daily basis, allowing individuals a great deal of choice in how they live their lives (See Acton 1974, Okely 1983, Stewart 1994, Bhopal & Myers, 2008). These general characterisations were all evidenced in the current research, with the possible exception of a trend towards families' anticipating that their daughters might be more involved in generating income in the future. Mr Y. for example explained in some detail how he enjoyed all aspects of his daily life including work, non-work and other marginal activities, (specifically speculative purchases of artwork that may or may not translate into a future sale), and how he enjoyed returning home and 'telling the story' of his day to his wife and daughter.

Just as Mr Y. followed patterns that allowed him to successfully mix work and non-work activities in a very flexible manner, so too many other respondents talked about the pleasure they derived from retaining a degree of flexibility in their lives. This often materialised around the organisation of family activities based on a potential work situation, (e.g. attending a horse fair where work and social activities could be combined), or in response to an unexpected opportunity, (heavy snowfall for example). Mr W. who breeds and trains horses on his own land and ranch was interviewed the day after an extremely heavy snowfall in the south of England; he explained how the whole family had taken the opportunity to build snowmen and generally enjoy this unexpected meteorological moment. Similarly Mr and Mrs E. abandoned work the same morning and took their children out of school in order to visit a local hill with sledges and snowboards. A degree of intimacy between family and working lives was also demonstrated by Mr Y. who regularly

combined holidays in Europe with his family with specific business activities. (i.e. collecting Christmas trees for sale in the UK), and also in the domestic arrangements of several respondents whose business premises either overlapped or were in close proximity to their living areas.

Respondents described their experience of work and employment as being different to that of non-Gypsies with a greater emphasis on 'living for the moment', and also a lesser distinction between family life and working lives, than was felt to typify traditional non-Gypsy lives. Bhopal & Myers (2008) however, note that in some respects the otherness associated with Gypsy work patterns can be over-emphasised by non-Gypsies, they note aspects of Gypsy self-employment that mirrored the *yuppy* sensibilities typified in the years of Margaret Thatcher's Prime-Ministership, but were not regarded with the same brash tolerance afforded *loadsamoney* culture generally. More recent changes in the employment market typified by working from home and greater self-employment tend to portray working from home as a means of encouraging workplace flexibility, allowing employees 'to better balance their home life with their responsibilities at work' (DWP, 2009). Despite these changes to working practices, generally perceptions of Gypsy choices about employment do not appear to have changed. Casa-Nova notes how changes to employment economies show Gypsies to possess a degree of occupational flexibility that makes them both sensitive and vulnerable to change, but at the same time they are adaptable to new markets and processes of work inherent to new forms of organization. (Casa Nova, 2007:112).

5.6 Gypsy identity and work

Mr and Mrs E. explained how they were very concerned that their reputation amongst non-Gypsies in the immediate locality was adversely affected by the need for them to submit a planning application request to build on their land. Their planning application for a temporary right to remain on their land was published online by West Sussex County Council and reported significant details about their 'Gypsy' background, including details of Mrs E.'s family background in horse dealing and details of her children's school attendance. To be successful in their planning application the E.'s had to demonstrate they were 'Gypsies'. Mrs E. noted,

Now everyone knows who we are. They know all our business. We had hundreds of people not wanting Gypsies living here and now they think they know who we are because of this [their planning application].

The E.'s are self-employed. Mr E. is a builder who both works onsite and sub-contracts some work out. Mrs E. works with him on a regular basis as a painter and decorator. Prior to the planning application a lot of their work was very local and Mrs E. was concerned the increased awareness of their Gypsy background would have adverse repercussions for their ability to secure new contracts,

Nobody knew us from Adam. He's just a builder. Now we're the local Gypsies – it's not good.
(Mrs E.)

Mr E. explained how the last few years had been a successful time for them since their son started at the local school,

That was quite helpful when [his elder son] started school. We talked to the parents and there's always somebody looking for someone to do some work. I did three loft conversions one after the other on the back of that. It's not the end of the world [i.e. if this source of work dried up] – I can always get new work – but it's good to do something local. (Mr E.)

The E.'s had kept their Gypsy identity to themselves in their dealings with the non-Gypsy world for example in their relations with the school or with potential clients. If asked directly they would not hide their roots, but they made no effort to announce their Gypsy background to non-Gypsies. Mr Y. also a builder noted a similar approach in relation to his work,

I don't go putting 'Gypsy Builders' on the side of my van do I? How much work would I get then?

Both Mr E. and Mr Y. had managed successful building operations for long periods of time. They both acknowledged the importance of 'word of mouth' to generate work, and with the vast majority of their work being carried out for non-Gypsies, they needed their reputation amongst non-Gypsies to remain favourable. Their status as Gypsies often seemed to result in an in-built handicap to their working prospects. However, Mr Y. was also involved in a variety of other employment ventures, some of which relied explicitly on his Gypsy credentials. He was a regular buyer and seller at car boot sales and weekend markets and had established a reputation of always being interested in buying books, pictures, artefacts and artwork with a Gypsy theme. Talking about a large open market he regularly attended, Mr Y. explained,

They all know me there. If anything comes up they put it aside for me. I picked up a Borrow' this morning – you just have to look.

Mr Y. demonstrated his expertise, and took great pleasure in doing so, by pulling a nineteenth century print out from his van and talked through his ability 'to notice things', by listing aspects of architecture, costume and horse features, that he believed firmly established the print as relating to an East European scene of a Gypsy breaking horses. Mr Y. sold his purchases from an internet site and at specialist fairs that he organised along the south coast. In this aspect of his work he was explicitly open about his family's standing as successful Gypsies and about his own expert knowledge. Again his main customers were non-Gypsies but in the surroundings of a Gypsy art fair his presence was dictated by the need to be seen to be a Gypsy. Observing Mr Y. and his family running a Gypsy Art Fair event it was also noticeable that he would exaggerate certain aspects of his character. Naturally a voluble man, he made a point of loudly greeting visitors to the fair in a bucolic welcoming fashion. Furthermore his wife also exaggerated elements of her behaviour; noisily walking around the fair with a large wooden stick and regularly calling out across the fair to her sisters to check on whether they needed 'a cup of tea'. The image presented to the world was noisy and vivid, very different to that presented to visitors to the Y.'s trailer, (which was generally much more peaceful and calm). It was also an image that seemed to be distinguishable from media generated images of 'traditional' Gypsies and was clearly different to the portrayal of Gypsies in television programmes such as *My Big Fat Gypsy Wedding* (Channel 4, 2011). It was a performance developed specifically around an event such as an art fair in which it became possible for non-Gypsy customers to identify and validate the Y.'s as genuine Gypsies. A similar performance was also observed at a car boot sale in which Mr Y. was negotiating the purchase of goods from non-Gypsy traders. In this role he created a particular niche identity for himself in which he was again loudly present as the well-known 'Gypsy trader in Gypsy artefacts'.

Mr Y was also involved in organising one particular event in which he attempted to recreate Appleby Fair, (a large annual horse fair traditionally attended by many Gypsies in the Cumbrian town of Appleby), in the South-east, but specifically aimed at a non-Gypsy audience,

Mr Y.:	It's Appleby lite! Appleby for <i>gaujos</i> .
MM:	Does it generate much of a profit?
Mr Y.:	No. Pennies really but we get a good day out.

This last comment seemed a little suspect for an event that had secured three years funding from the Lottery and as most of the food stalls seemed to be doing a substantial trade selling to non-Gypsies and other stalls selling between Gypsies, (clothes, pottery and horse gear), also seemed to be doing good business. One interesting aspect of Mr Y.'s behaviour at the horse fair, which was attended by several hundred Gypsies as well as the much larger non-Gypsy 'audience', was that his presentation of self in these circumstances was

again clearly different. He was a much quieter and less obtrusive figure at the horse fair than at the art fair despite being the organiser of both events. He spent his time moving from one conversation to another within groups of Gypsies all of whom he seemed to know well and on good terms with.

5.7 Work and the Stranger

Work and the wider processes of generating income is one aspect of Gypsy lives in which there is an identifiable need to develop contacts with non-Gypsies. For most respondents their experience of work was to some extent determined by how much or how little of their Gypsy identity they revealed. In this respect Simmel's portrayal of the stranger who is both within and without society is very resonant. All of the respondents in this study relied upon the economies they shared with non-Gypsies. None of the respondents relied entirely upon their trading links with other Gypsies or lived lives entirely divorced from non-Gypsies.

Respondents' work broke down into different categories. Certain niche markets such as the Gypsy fairs selling memorabilia and art work actively thrived on individuals identifying themselves as Gypsies. Some other, also niche markets, such as the annual selling of Christmas trees and wreathes, seemed unaffected by the need to maintain discretion about identity. However, general building work and trades such as double-glazing required individuals to be more circumspect and to maintain a distance between the public contractual face and the private Gypsy identity. Some respondents only ever worked on jobs that were situated beyond a fixed spatial point; Mr M. for example only ever carried out work as a landscape gardener or tree surgeon within the M25 despite living on the south coast.

Work distinguished Gypsies from non-Gypsies because it delineated the different processes Gypsies went through to generate income from non-Gypsy economies. It was a process by which Gypsies were effectively defined as an 'other', as a group of people who are identifiably distinct from their non-Gypsy neighbours. This happened in different ways and with different consequences depending on circumstance; for some respondents their lives revolved around multiple engagements with their own identity. For example, as discussed Mr Y. at different times performed both openly as a Gypsy and at other times he kept this aspect of his life hidden, depending on what work he was doing at a given time. In Simmel's description of the *stranger* there is perhaps anticipation that the *stranger's* foreignness is clearly known to those around him. This was not readily apparent in this research; respondents clearly felt there were circumstances in which

they shielded their identity from non-Gypsies. Furthermore, in the performed aspect of being a Gypsy it was clear that Mr Y. for one was quite capable of engineering an effective role of what a Gypsy might be believed to be (by non-Gypsies). This role was created around an opportunity to generate income and was seemingly recognisable to those who observed him at work. It was not a role however, that could simply be accounted for as that of being a 'stranger', it was not after all a universal model of what Gypsies were like or even a model of what Mr Y. was generally like.

More closely mirroring the Simmel model were the overarching experiences of Gypsies being regarded by non-Gypsies within a set of uncomplimentary stereotypes. Many respondents referred to the ways in which their engagement with non-Gypsy economies was often viewed as criminal and of less productive worth. Mr V. noted,

It's the old story. If a *gaujo* builds a wall everyone tells him it's a work of art. Do you know what I mean though? They'll just look at the wall and go on about the craftsmanship and the skill. If a Gypsy builds a wall they say it's going to fall down the next day.

And according to Mr Y. (who was clearly speaking ironically at the time);

Well we never pay tax do we? [laughing] I wouldn't think to have an accountant would I? No tax, no driving licence, no insurance...people think we live on the moon or something. And then they think their lot are perfect and never fiddled anything.

Gypsies were othered within their working lives both in the sense of being Simmel's *stranger*, that is as recognisable outsiders who coexist with their neighbours; and also on a more marginal basis, hiding aspects of Gypsy identity on the one hand or performing bastardised versions of it on the other. Their public working lives were in some respects constrained by the label of 'Gypsy' that was attached to them, (i.e. negatively as 'Gypsy builder' or positively as in the 'Gypsy artist'), or because they had to protect themselves from such labelling, (e.g. travelling outside of their local area to secure work). Ironically their private lives, although often intrinsically bound to work routines that were complicated and contradictory, were often managed with great flexibility in order to follow pleasurable social and leisure activities with other family members. Managing often very complex performances of Gypsy identity generated not only the necessary income to live but also protected a core sense of Gypsy identity.

5.8 Conclusions

This chapter has highlighted a number of differences or changes to the work patterns demonstrated by respondents in this research to what have been anticipated. In particular that the adaptability of Gypsies (which would be anticipated) materialised to a greater extent in terms of different gender roles. Women were noted to contribute to a greater extent than expected and attitudes to women working were more positive than anticipated. In particular there was a strong desire for girls to acquire skills to be independent of family or marital ties in the future and go to work in non-traditional environments. The need to generate income highlights the closeness of Gypsy lives to non-Gypsies and this is a topic that is explored further in chapter 6 which examines families' choices about schooling and education. The closeness between specific family members and non-Gypsies was also identified as being in some flux along gender lines; with greater participation of women in work practices and greater reliance on benefit payments there was evidence that Gypsy women were developing marginally closer links to the non-Gypsy world whilst men were being marginally distanced from it.

Notes

1. 'Borrow' refers to a book by the nineteenth century writer George Borrow (1914, 1982) who wrote several collectible books about Gypsies.

Chapter 6 Schools and Education

6.1 Introduction

This chapter considers respondents' experiences of education, in particular those of sending children to schools that they identified as being non-Gypsy institutions. Many families discussed the problems they encountered when Gypsy and non-Gypsy cultures were in close proximity and the school was one site in which this clash of cultures was particularly acute. This chapter discusses accounts of these experiences and their consequences, often typified by patterns of increasing discomfort between families and schools followed by the non-attendance of pupils. It argues that the 'citizenship' agenda taught and fostered in schools, particularly that designed to install a sense of shared identity, often work to exclude Gypsy families. The apparent closeness engendered by Gypsy children attending the same schools as non-Gypsies is actually ambiguous; distanced in part by a school ethos that promotes the values of a shared citizenship that is not embraced by Gypsy pupils.

6.2 Gypsies, education and citizenship

Marshall (1950) argues that formal education is a duty related to the creation of citizens who are capable of displaying the qualities desired in citizens. The numbers of Gypsy children who have received a formal education in the UK has historically always been very low in comparison to that received by all other ethnic groups. Acton (2004) suggests that in wake of the Plowden Report (1967) there has been a significant increase in the numbers of children attending. Whereas in the late 1960s only around 4% of Gypsy children attended schools this rose to a figure of around 70% by the mid-1990s. It is startling to consider that in the late 1960s, following two decades of the welfare state, in which the values attached to citizenship established themselves within the British *psyche*, so few Gypsy children were receiving a formal education. Since 2003 the Pupil Level Annual School Census (PLASC) has collected data for children under the categories 'Gypsy, Roma and Traveller' and 'Travellers of Irish Heritage', (prior to this no comparable ethnic category was used). Using PLASC data Myers and Bhopal (2009) argue that despite greater numbers attending school, large numbers of Gypsy children have not received a school education in the last fifty years and a sizeable

number still do not do so. In the context of citizenship this raises an immediate problem for Gypsies. In part eligibility for being a citizen includes being an educated citizen. The perception that Gypsies are uneducated feeds into wider public imaginations of Gypsy stereotypes promoting a view that they are outsiders (Bhopal and Myers, 2008).

The Plowden Report, originally commissioned by a Conservative Government, was finally published against the backdrop of Circular 10/65 (Department of Education and Science, 1965), in which the then Labour Government, set out their proposals for comprehensive schooling to address the inequalities of the tri-partite system. It was the first comprehensive account of primary schooling in the UK and identifies Gypsies as

probably the most severely deprived children in the country. Most of them do not even go to school, and the potential abilities of those who do are stunted. (1967:59)

The report goes on to note that:

The case of the gypsies illustrates another aspect of the policies required in educational priority areas. Improved education alone cannot solve the problems of these children. Simultaneous action is needed by the authorities responsible for employment, industrial training, housing and planning. (1967:60)

In many respects what The Plowden Report does, is set the tone for the future education priorities of Gypsies by firstly noting that Gypsies are not receiving an education and secondly calling for greater numbers of Gypsy children to be educated within the extant sedentary schooling culture. This is apparent in the second quotation above, which notes the wider governmental interest that needs to be shown in the lives of Gypsy children. The Plowden Report emphasises that Gypsies should become more like their fellow citizens, their lifestyle is identified as falling outside of acceptable norms for the behaviour of citizens, and educating children is a first step towards transforming Gypsy children's lives, (this is discussed in detail in Appendix 12 to the report which outlines Gypsy history and lifestyles). It is,

In their own interests and in the nation's they merit help of the kind we recommend. (1967:59)

In 2000 the then Department for Education and Employment (DEE) commissioned a report (Bhopal et al, 2000) that in many ways sought to review the progress made since Plowden. This report noted how many of the same concerns raised in the Plowden Report had been consistently noted in government sponsored research in the intervening years, in particular concerns about poor attendance and lack of achievement by Gypsy children. What the 2000 report perhaps failed to acknowledge was the shift in tone by government

towards the topic of Gypsy education since Plowden, which was in fact exemplified within the 2000 report, which the authors in their preface noted,

the education of these communities presents the settled population with an important challenge to ensure that differences in life style and culture are not seen in deficit terms. (Bhopal et al, 2000)

There is a clear recognition that Gypsy culture has value in and of itself and, should not as might be inferred from the more assimilatory tones of Plowden, be seen as representing a community ripe for conversion to the cultural practices of the wider population. This change in tone is also reflected in reports that acknowledged the cultural differences between Gypsies and non-Gypsies and described the impact these have upon school attendance. The 1996 Ofsted report, *The Education of Travelling Children*, for example unpacks the many cultural differences between Gypsies and non-Gypsies that affect the attendance of children. This report also underlines the pressures brought to bear upon Gypsies not to educate their children. Although these include accounts of bullying and racist name-calling by pupils towards their Gypsy peers, even more effective are the efforts made by adults to exclude Gypsy children from an education.

Ofsted noted,

Historically, Gypsy Traveller children have also been hindered in their access to schools by the attitudes of some head teachers, governors and others in the non-Travelling settled society. Negative attitudes frequently manifest themselves in the refusal to admit Travelling children or in delay or the imposition of difficult or discriminatory conditions. In some cases, threats and acts of physical violence by members of the settled community have been sufficient to deter Gypsy parents from placing their children in school. (Ofsted 1996:6)

The 2000 DEE report and all subsequent research in this area identify similar barriers for Gypsy families wanting to educate their children (Bhopal et al, 2000; DfES, 2003, 2005; Derrington and Kendall, 2004; Bhopal and Myers, 2006, 2009a, 2009b; Myers and Bhopal, 2009). What this suggests, is that whilst there may be a change of tone in the official approach towards providing an education this is not materializing in schools themselves. This poses two particular problems for Gypsy families; firstly many Gypsies simply are ineligible to be considered citizens because they have no formal education, and secondly many Gypsies are being actively denied a right to citizenship by other citizens denying them an education. Citizenship is used to exclude Gypsies on ethnic grounds from the rights of being a citizen.

6.3 Families

This research had a partial genesis in other projects looking at home education and the schooling of Gypsy children; one consequence of this was that a high number of the families (75%) interviewed had children of school age as demonstrated in table 6.1.

	Families	%
Families with school age children	24	75
Families without school age children	7	22
Not Known	1	3
Total number of families	32	

Table 6.1 Families by School Aged children

School aged was taken to mean children attending primary school (years 1-6 of the school curriculum) or secondary school (years 7-11 of the school curriculum); essentially children in the study that were aged between 5 and 16 years old at the start of the school year. Table 6.2 gives a breakdown of the total family members under the age of 18:

	Number	%
5 years and under (pre-school age)	5	8
Primary school (5-11 year olds)	22	35
Secondary School (11-16 year olds)	30	48
17-18 year olds	6	10
Total	63	

Table 6.2 Family Members under the age of 18

In total the 24 families with school aged children had 52 children of school age and in addition 6 other children aged 17 or 18 years of age were identified by families during the research. There were 22 children of primary school age and 30 children of secondary school age. In addition five families also had children below school age.

As would be anticipated, from the vast literature examining Gypsy pupils' school attendance (see for example, Plowden, 1967; Wilkin et al, 2009; Myers, 2012), many children who were of compulsory school

age did not attend school. Table 6.3 highlights the much higher rates of non-attendance at secondary school as compared to primary school.

Attending school	Number
Primary school aged attending school	20
Primary school aged not attending school	2
<i>(Total Primary school aged</i>	<i>22)</i>
Secondary school aged attending school	10
Secondary school aged not attending school	20
<i>(Total secondary school aged</i>	<i>30)</i>
Total school aged	52

Table 6.3 School Aged children by attendance

6.4 Non-attendance

Since the publication of the Plowden Report in 1967, it has been widely identified that many Gypsy children of school age do not attend school, (Ivatts, 1975; Swann, 1985; OFSTED 1996, 2003; Bhopal et al, 2000; DCSF, 2008; Cemlyn et al 2009, DFE 2010). However, the numbers of children attending since the 1960's has significantly increased; Myers and Bhopal, (2009) suggest that whilst less than 5% of Gypsy children attended school in 1967 by the mid-1990's it was closer to 70% and this figure has remained fairly constant until the present day. The 2009 EHRC Research Report (Cemlyn et al., 2009) identified a decline in educational achievement for Gypsy groups, contrary to the evidence available for all other ethnic groups. In the present research 30 out of 52, or fewer than 58%, of school aged children were attending school.

All of the parents interviewed expressed some positive/supportive views about their children obtaining a school education. In particular parents identified that schooling could provide elements of education that were not generated within the Gypsy community. According to Mrs A.,

You live in a caravan, you travel, but you still want the best for your kids. And education is getting more and more important these days....If you can't read or write you're going to be lost in your own world.

Mrs A. went on to discuss how the impact of technology in people's lives meant there was an even greater need for Gypsy children to access education.

Parental views ranged across a spectrum from parents who only wanted their children to attend primary school in order to learn to read and write to parents who expressed a desire that their children should go to university. However, even parents with very positive attitudes towards schooling expressed concerns about the effects of attending school on their children's identity and relationship to Gypsy culture.

A number of specific reasons were given for not attending school and these reflected previous research (e.g. Bhopal et al 2000; Wilkin et al, 2009; Cemlyn et al, 2009). These included fears of cultural erosion, experiences of racism and name-calling, bullying and school exclusions. In many cases parents discussed the crossover between different pressures encountered by pupils in school, Mrs S. for example described how following instances of name calling and bullying at secondary school, her son became involved in a fight with other pupils and was then excluded from the school.

He actually got hit by a boy a few months ago, which resulted in Billy punching the boy over the table. They then phoned me up and said that he had punched the boy in the throat, etc., etc. and had to be sent home and Billy swore on his life that he hadn't.

Mrs S. went on to describe further problems caused by her son's exclusion including his experience of being regularly stopped and questioned on the street by police because he was not at school.

6.4.1 Cultural erosion/maintaining culture

Mr Y. was one of the parents who most overtly demonstrated an interest and enthusiasm for ensuring his daughter received a full education, with a view to ensuring her future independence as an adult. Mr Y. described the importance of identifying schools that were sympathetic to Gypsies,

Traveller-friendly means that you've got somebody that will accommodate Travellers in the school. Right? That's willing to take them in and won't be hostile to their coming in....They accommodate or have an understanding or have come across it or have had Travellers in the school before.

Mr Y. then described how he had been impressed by a school which had been willing to 'bend over backwards' to accommodate specific needs, such as children taking days off in order to attend culturally significant events including weddings and fairs. He also described how the school in conjunction with the Traveller Education Service had even supplied teachers with a specific remit to accompany Gypsy children

on school trips, (an opportunity which his own daughter would otherwise have missed due to safety concerns). Having identified a school for his daughter which met his expectations of being a good, 'Traveller-friendly' school, and which also was a school he had recommended to other family members, Mr Y. then went on to discuss the reasons why he had withdrawn his daughter from school aged 14,

[It's] No fault of the school....I'm afraid it's the people they have to teach. The inhabitants of the school. The settled population right have got a different view from that age on than what we have. (Mr Y.)

Like other respondents he identified concerns about his child being exposed to what he perceived as typical non-Gypsy adolescent behaviours. This included drinking alcohol, drug use and early sexualised behaviour that he felt clashed with Gypsy morals and culture,

When they get to that age the girls and boys at secondary school start mixing and talking and chatting where they've been the night before and what they've been doing doesn't suit our way of life. (Mr Y.)

Discussing non-Gypsy girls he described how they,

don't mind showing their bits and bobs to the boys. The boys think everybody's like that....our children are not like that and we got a different moral code. (Mr Y.)

Mr Y. believed his daughter and other children were torn apart by having to live within two very different 'moral codes'; the dissolute and corrupting code of the settled, non-Gypsy population encountered at school and the strictly moral code of home lives amongst Gypsies. Reconciling the two positions was felt to be impossible and made it impossible to continue with schooling; instead Mr Y. withdrew his daughter from school and arranged for her to receive further education from a private tutor. Mr and Mrs Y. put this into a wider context of the care they had exercised throughout their daughter's life. She had for example always lived on Gypsy sites, most recently the substantial and secluded site owned by the Y.'s that provided accommodation solely for close family members. Whilst at primary school although she had been allowed to invite her friends to visit her on the site, the family felt they were unable to reciprocate visits to her non-Gypsy friends. The Y.'s described how they would explain to other non-Gypsy parents that they were unable to let their daughter visit their homes. They described their concerns about non-Gypsy families who 'don't know anything about their neighbours', this was contrasted to their expectations of Gypsy neighbours about whom, they felt they knew everything. Similarly Mr Y. explained,

You see, we've got a closed environment here, right? Our father-in-law there, cousin up there and now my sister-in-law down there, right? So, we know everybody here, right? When you're in a

council estate, you don't know who's moving next door to you, right? Her Uncle Billy has turned up a week ago. We don't know where he's come from. So, we don't put our children in somebody else's hands. You know what I mean? Whereas here we know who everybody is, you know?

Mr W. described how a boy in his daughter's class had been 'classified as a sex addict', whilst he was vague on the details of what this meant, he used this as an example of the morally dubious nature of the non-Gypsy world. The presence of a 'sex addict' both highlighted the moral failings of *gaujo* adolescents and the willingness of the school to allow such a person to remain, was seen as indicative of a lack of safety in the school. Mr W. felt that expecting his daughter to be taught alongside such a person was outrageous, 'how can that be right? How can you teach a pervert?' (Mr W.).

Other parents commented on how exposure to non-Gypsy culture had a detrimental impact on their children from a wider perspective than that of simply accessing education. Mr M. for example noted that going to school had a different impact on children's opportunities compared to that of parents and the Gypsy community, 'it's good for them, but not for us'. Education was understood to benefit children but at a cost to the wider community. TB a TES Field Worker who was interviewed during the project echoed Mr M.'s observation closely, noting that at secondary age in particular Gypsy children often wanted to share in the behaviours of their non-Gypsy peers and in consequence parents felt that,

Putting them into education, for a lot of them [Gypsy families] is good for the children, but it's not maybe so good for their traditional way of life. (TB)

Some parents identified particular failings in the multicultural aspects of schooling, such as teaching about other ethnic minority cultures. In particular there was a widely held view that schools were comfortable to educate around indigenous British culture and other ethnic minority cultures, but that Gypsy culture and lifestyles were not reflected within the curriculum,

They're teaching all other cultures, so why can't they teach the Romany Gypsy culture....identify the difference between a Romany Gypsy, an Irish Tinker and what they call a Pikey? It's knowing that the Romany Gypsies don't all link together with the other cultures. (Mr F.)

Schools were seen on the one hand to introduce and encourage patterns of behaviour that actively worked against the values of Gypsy culture, such as the exposure to promiscuous behaviours, and, on the other hand failing to promote knowledge of Gypsy culture. Regarding the latter, several parents noted the prominence

given to non-British cultural events, (e.g. Hanukah or Diwali celebrations), within curriculum activities but felt that occasions that might elicit a similar resonance within Gypsy lives were not represented.

Some families discussed how Gypsy culture was further marginalised by teachers who actively countered knowledge of Gypsy culture. Mrs W. for example discussed how his daughter had encountered a teacher who refused to accept that Gypsies were victims of the Nazi holocaust. This resulted in an argument between in the first instance her daughter and the teacher, which led to a dispute between the family and the school and concluded with the exclusion of the daughter from school. A TES field worker confirmed that the teacher had argued Gypsies were not holocaust victims, but suggested the girl was excluded due to a perception of the wider aggression of the family. The family's reaction to holocaust denial on the part of a teacher was understandably furious and tarnished the family's relationship with the school.

Mrs T. raised concerns about the lack of knowledge of Gypsy culture within schools, again in reference to the holocaust she noted how important aspects of Gypsy history were not taught,

There was thousands of Gypsies that got gassed, and nobody knows it. Not a lot of people know it anyway... And I know for a fact no children know it. Instead of them learning history about the bloody King of England, you know what I mean? Let them learn about their own bloody history!

Mrs T. also suggested that there was a need not just to educate Gypsies about Gypsy culture but the whole school population. She suggested, "They should be teaching *gaujos* what we are like", because the alternative was that the same negative stories about Gypsies were perpetuated and 'shit sticks'.

Schools are a site in which there is a very visible clash between Gypsy and non-Gypsy culture. For many parents it was difficult to reconcile this clash; often the only real alternative was believed to be the withdrawal of children from school. In particular as children got older and approached adolescence or transferred to secondary schools, parents identified a greater intensity concerning the impact of non-Gypsy culture and the emergence of issues identified with non-Gypsy youth culture, such as sexually active behaviour that their own children needed to be shielded from.

Schooling, particularly at secondary level, presented a collision between on the one hand exposure to non-Gypsy moral and cultural codes, (or at least to the perception of what constituted these codes), and on the other an education that at best marginalised Gypsy experience. As a consequence families felt it was

detrimental to support their children's continued attendance as this could result in children moving away from their Gypsy culture and hence losing some aspects of their cultural identity.

6.4.2. Name-calling and racism

All but one of the parents with school aged children reported varying levels of racism at the schools attended by their children. The example cited above of a teacher refusing to acknowledge Gypsies were victims of the holocaust was probably the most extreme form of racism described; it was certainly an example in which the teaching role of an adult in authority heightened the offense that was taken. More generally Gypsy children were victims of name calling by their non-Gypsy peers. Mrs B. described how her three children were routinely called names whilst at primary school,

It's always the same story, dirty little this, pikey, gypso. They all heard that. It's a reason for not going now.

Similarly Mrs E. noted how when it became known that her family were Gypsies, (something she had hidden for several years), her son who was attending primary school started being called names by children who previously had played with him with few problems. Mrs E. explained that if this continued at secondary school then she would take her son out of the school.

Some parents suggested that the attitude of the school teaching staff had a significant impact upon whether or not children were called racist names. Mrs F. whose children were attending different schools noted that at one particular school, children and parents would say to her children and to her,

Oh you're a pikey, you're married to a pikey family and everything else, but since they started introducing the culture [a reference to lessons on the school curriculum about Gypsies] to [another school], my other children are not getting it. They don't come home and say, oh, we've been called a smelly pikey today.

Mrs A. also described incidents in which she believed racism directed towards her children, was treated less seriously, than those involving other non-white ethnic minorities. Mrs A. recounted a dispute she had with a teacher who confiscated her daughter's charm bracelet because it included two gold golliwog¹ charms, which he considered to be inherently racist,

I said what about when she was called a filthy stinking dirty Gypsy? And he went I don't recall, and I said [daughter's name], did he say it? Yes she went yes you did... You could see he's lying....if she was black there would be an outrage about it. (Mrs A.)

Mrs A., like other parents felt that whilst other non-white ethnic minority cultures were respected, Gypsy culture was not. So racism that was directed at a black pupil would be identified and dealt with as a serious incident by the school. However, when racist name-calling was directed at Gypsy pupils, parents felt this would be treated less seriously and not be identified as a racist incident. It should be noted that Mrs A. did not acknowledge the possible racist connotations associated with golliwogs (Kushner, 1999) were worthy of serious examination. In a similar vein, many parents, including Mrs A., made statements about the prevalence of paedophilia within non-Gypsy communities. These often included an assumption that paedophilia was a trait of non-Gypsy communities; an assumption that could reasonably be regarded as offensive and racist by non-Gypsies, being based purely on their ethnic background. The exposure to continual racism in aspects of their daily lives did not make families empathetic towards the impact of racism *per se*; rather it heightened the sense of isolation and danger of being a Gypsy amongst non-Gypsies.

6.4.3 Bullying

Although there is no legal definition of bullying successive Education departments have used similar types of definitions which generally highlight that bullying is

- repeated
- intended to hurt someone physically or emotionally
- often aimed at certain groups, e.g. because of race, religion, gender or sexual orientation

(Bullying at School – a definition, www.gov.uk, 2012)

The descriptions of racist name-calling described by most parents clearly fitted well within the parameters of such definitions. Additionally being within the context of a 'prohibited reason', such name-calling would amount to harassment under the terms of *The Equalities Act* (2010).

However, when asked about bullying, parents did not always identify name-calling as bullying but focused instead on physical attacks directed at their children. It often appeared that parents accepted the inevitability of racist name-calling both inside and outside of school. Despite the unhappiness they felt about such name-calling, many appeared resigned to it being an everyday experience for their families.

Parents also described a bullying approach taken by many teachers; Mrs K. noted a number of very specific complaints about the treatment of her own and other Gypsy children at one school. Describing the classroom behaviours of teachers she suggested they, 'seem like to pick on the travelling children more than the other children'. Whilst her eldest 16 year old son was doing well at school and studying for GCSEs, her younger 14 year old son had been home educated for two years. He had left school following a series of incidents around fighting, after which he was excluded from school. According to Mrs K. following the exclusion no alternative schools were made available and she stated she felt he had now, 'been out too long', to return to school. Both Mrs K. and Mrs T. described how many Gypsy pupils were regularly sent by the school to 'the bungalow', a discrete building on the school grounds away from the school to be punished, (if they were not excluded). On one occasion Mrs K. picked her son up from 'the bungalow' and discovered he was being made to sweep the floor,

MM:	Did you say anything to the school about that?
Mrs K.:	Yeah I did I told them that he was here to learn to read and write and not to sit with a brush in his hand all day sweeping the floors.
MM:	What was the response to that?
Mrs K.:	Well he said to me it was his punishment.

On another occasion her son was told to remove his shoes and socks when he went into the school's dinner hall,

Mrs K.:	Make 'em walk into dinner with no shoes and socks on.
MM:	Was there a reason for that or is it - ?
Mrs K.:	Because they thought he was going to run away.

Whilst parents did describe specific instances of bullying, in many respects it was the holistic impression of how schools were governed and managed that was felt to be oppressive to Gypsies. School attendance tended to foreshadow experiences of non-Gypsy institutions to be faced in the future. For example, the experience of being told to remove shoes and socks in order to curtail a pupil's ability to run away resembles the experience of Gypsies caught up in the criminal justice system. When charged with offences it often appears that Gypsies are treated in a biased, and Gypsy specific manner, often being held on remand rather offered bail terms because 'of a perceived risk of absconding' (Cemlyn et al., 2009:11).

The relationships within schools between Gypsies and non-Gypsy pupils, teachers and the institution itself are all tarnished within a context of bullying. Often these repeated behaviours that are not just specific to

schools but reflect the wider Gypsy experience of non-Gypsy society. Many Gypsy parents anticipate the experience of attending schools will mirror that of life outside the school.

6.4.4 Parental experiences

Many parents described how their own experiences of schooling were either very limited or associated with very unhappy memories. Mrs K. who described her son's problems at school above recalled how she was 'pulled out' of school aged 13,

MM: And do you have any negative memories?
Mrs K.: - no just the same as it is now.
MM: Same things as –
Mrs K.: You're called Gypsy and "Oh flea bag's come in" and things like that you know.

And went on to recall,

And like we children – they didn't want to know us. Just the travelling children would be in the playground you know, on their own, and all the other children would stay well away from us, you know, saying "Oh you'll get diseases off them". (Mrs K.)

Her neighbour, Mrs T., who lived on the same local authority site, described how when she was growing up her family still used to travel regularly and this had an impact on when she could attend school,

I didn't go to school in the summer because I was still a Traveller. I only went to school in the winter and I didn't like it....I used to run away from school actually!

She went on to note that many things had changed since her childhood. She was for example no longer travelling, now lived on a site and was reliant on state benefits for her income. Mrs T. noted that an education was important for her children and other children on the site to make a living and be secure in the future. In this respect she was actively campaigning for educational provision for Gypsies living on the Docks Site to be delivered on the site. She was involved in discussions primarily with the Traveller Education Service, but also directly with the local authority, to promote the idea of a visiting teacher to the site. In other words the value of a *gaujo* education was accepted, but the means of engaging with that education through schools was not. Mrs T., like most of the other parents on the site had withdrawn her children from secondary education and was officially home educating.

Like Mrs T. many other respondents described their own memories of attending school as being very difficult, Mr F. recalled,

I got called pikey, smelly Gypsy, nitty head.

It is unsurprising that many parents felt little compunction about withdrawing their children from school, when their own very negative experiences were apparently being reproduced in schools their children were attending.

In many respects the historic experiences of parents linked together all the negative aspects associated with Gypsy children attending school. The repetition of bullying, name calling or being treated as a second-class citizen were all manifested in the experiences of children attending school today. Allied to this were concerns about aspects of child safety and whether what was being learned at school would have a detrimental impact upon the child, the family and the wider community. For many parents it appeared the experience of schooling had not radically changed from their own schooldays, which had delivered little of any real value to their upbringing.

6.5 Critical Moments: generic and specific

In the current research and as widely documented, (e.g. OFSTED, 1999; Derrington and Kendall, 2004; Myers *et al*, 2010), there are a number of critical moments when choices are made about whether or not pupils should remain within schools. Some of these moments relate to generic patterns in school attendance; for example, respondents in this research identified moments such as the transition from primary to secondary school and/or the transition from pre-pubescence into adolescence as critical moments when choices were made. In addition there were key moments that were far more specific to individual narratives; for example, an experience of bullying or name-calling and the subsequent ways a school was perceived as dealing with this specific event. Inevitably there is a crossover between generic and specific events; an event at school might in the words of Mrs A. be 'the last straw' or might be construed as indicative of reaching a point of no return. So for example, a 14 year old girl being subjected to name-calling might be withdrawn

from secondary school, even though the same girl experienced similar name-calling at Primary School, but remained in school.

6.5.1 The generic moment

In some respects the generic moment when families reached a decision not to continue with schooling were often predetermined. So for example the CC. children did not make the transition to secondary schooling despite a relatively successful experience of primary schooling and despite parental acknowledgement of value being placed upon the education offered by school attendance. Both boys continued their education after primary school by learning a trade (double-glazing) from their father, and in the case of the younger son who was of secondary school age, there was an element of home education (he had a weekly session with a home tutor), but they never attended secondary school. The CC.'s choice was clearly made before their children were of secondary school age and was a family decision that their children would attend primary school, 'get the basics, reading and writing, numbers' (Mr CC.), and then move on to work with their father.

The CC.'s described their life in terms of being 'private', meaning they kept themselves to themselves and maintained very few connections with non-Gypsies other than working arrangements and school attendance. They noted that it was 'traditional' for boys to go to work with their father and learn a trade at about 11 years old and they also noted that everyone 'they knew', (i.e. their extended family and other Gypsy families), adopted a similar approach. The CC. parents also outlined a position in which they were conscious that they personally were unable to equip their children with certain skills that they would require throughout their lives, such as literacy and numeracy and also newer technological skills. In order to meet these gaps they had used primary schooling and a home tutor:

Look. You want something better for your children don't you? Well we're the same we want them to have more than we had. So they can read and they can write and we have the tutor. (Mr CC.)

Describing their experience of their sons attending primary school, the CC.'s identified no examples of bullying or name-calling that had dramatically concerned them or made them consider withdrawing their children from primary school. As a family they had made no use of Traveller Education Services to mediate their relationship with the school and stressed their confidence in dealing with the school. At the same time

they discussed their awareness of bullying and racism within schools. The CC.'s described their own schooling, as being relatively free from bullying or racism, (this was unusual compared to other respondents), but contextualised this by noting they had few memories of school, which they both only attended sporadically and at a young age, with neither parent progressing to secondary school. MR CC. stressed his pride in his sons' abilities to generate income based on the skills he had passed on to them and their consequent ability to support their own families. The CC.'s management of their children's schooling and upbringing largely mirrored that of their own parents' management of their upbringing.

Taking the CC.'s account as a whole there was a sense in which they adopted an insular approach in which they engaged with non-Gypsies as little as possible. The choices they made for their children reflected the same choices that had determined their own schooling and also those of other Gypsy families with whom they had close contacts and who shared very similar values, (i.e. other families who would also withdraw their children from school in order to learn a parental trade). They effectively cherry-picked provision of other skills that were identified as important to their children's future, such as better literacy and numeracy skills, or new computer and internet related knowledge. Ross (2012) describes a 'citizenship identity' in terms of shared identity traits and the acquisition of wider knowledge. For families such as the CC.'s this is quietly closed down by, on the one hand non-attendance, and on the other by embracing the security of successful strategies. And, it should be noted, that the CC.'s strategy did appear to be a successful one. They appeared relatively affluent living in new trailers on their own land and, like Mr CC., his sons appeared to have the necessary skills to support themselves and their families in the future.

The CC.'s gave a strong impression of being a very secure family unit; they privileged traditionally understood Gypsy values such as the male, head of the household supporting the family through skills learnt within the family. Whilst the family, and their wider family connections, were insular and unwilling to engage with the non-Gypsy population there was no sense of being ill at ease or of lacking confidence in their dealings with the non-Gypsy population, (as demonstrated by their management of primary school relations and business links).

6.5.2 The specific moment

In addition to more generic moments such as the transition from primary to secondary school or the onset of puberty, families also described very specific moments in which they suddenly made a decision regarding the future schooling of their children.

Typically in response to an instance of bullying or name-calling pupils might be withdrawn from school. Mrs S. suggested she would withdraw her children from school,

If they were being bullied and the fact of racism, then yeah I would, without a doubt. (Mrs S.)

Mrs S. described how she withdrew her children at different stages from school, but at the time of her interview four out of five of her children were actually attending. Her two eldest children were attending secondary school and her two youngest were at primary school. Mrs S. noted a certain ambivalence towards secondary school attendance; suggesting that her two children who were attending secondary school did so as a result of their own choices and if they chose to leave she would not try to dissuade them.

She was also slightly ambivalent about the benefits to attending school, so whilst she was comfortable with subject matter such as reading and writing, home economics and vocational training she felt other subjects such as science were a waste of time.

Mrs S. described how one of her sons initially stopped attending secondary school because he was being 'picked on' by a teacher and went on to describe the wider impact of this. Her son's non-attendance became the source of problems with local police, there was,

A build-up of lots of things. You know what I mean? Repeated stop and searches through not being in school....Which amounts to him getting a bit peed off.

At the time of her interview Mrs S. was negotiating with Traveller Education Services arrangements for her son to start at another school; this was a complicated process, as Mrs S. was seeking to arrange for taxis to be provided at the expense of the local authority, to take her son to the family's school of preference. Mrs S. explained in great detail the wider context in which decisions around her son's non-attendance were made. These included specific events such as his being involved in fights at school in which the school placed all

the blame on her son, (in her son's account he was fighting back against gangs of other children), and of being subjected to name-calling (e.g. pikey scum). Mrs S. also contextualised these specific incidents within a much wider framework that included her different experiences, (positive and negative), at different schools and the experiences of her other children. Her eldest daughter for example had also been blamed in instances where she retaliated towards other children and the head teacher had refused to listen to her account of what had taken place. On other occasions at the school her children had been involved in fights where there was a racist element that the school failed to acknowledge; although this included an instance when the police agreed her children were the victims of racism. Within this wider context, when specific incidents did occur they were almost inevitably perceived at heightened levels of anxiety. Mrs S. described how,

Something happened, they put him in the music room and ended up four teachers guarding the door and wondering why he's kicking off, going absolutely stir crazy. *Because he's shut in a room.* (Mrs S., respondent's emphasis)

What Mrs S. described was an insecure set of circumstances that acknowledged a backdrop of 'traditional' views about how and when schooling ceases to be the right choice for Gypsy children. This view is compounded both by the wider experience of schooling, (bullying, racism and a failure to acknowledge Gypsy culture), and also by perceived networks of schools, social workers and police being actively intolerant of Gypsy lifestyles. In these circumstances a single incident easily triggers a pupil to leave school and thereby circumvent an engagement with the very oppressive non-Gypsy world.

Understandings of just how engrained non-Gypsy intolerance of Gypsies were voiced repeatedly by respondents. Often leading to a comment such as that made by Mrs E. when discussing the possibility of racist comments being made following the forthcoming transition of her son from primary to secondary school,

'He's out of there. Like that.'

Parents like the E.'s and S.'s identified very positive educational benefits to attending school, but they also placed these within a context of danger, one shaped by the proximity of Gypsies to non-Gypsies.

6.6 The School as a site of social interaction between Gypsies and their neighbours

Marshall (1950) makes the case that education is an obligation of citizenship rather than a right. In doing so he is suggesting that fledgling citizens need an engagement with each other and with learning processes that include an engagement with social forms of citizenship. There is a requirement for future citizens to learn about their society, its mores, rules and expected behaviours. Ross (2012) takes something of the Marshallian obligation into the 21st century by acknowledging the broader historical adaptations of citizenship in the UK. In particular he identifies globalised aspects of citizenship founded on human rights and also technologically driven ideas of what is meant by being a citizen; and flags up that school pupils need to be regarded as 'citizens *now* and not pre-citizens' (Ross, 2012: 41).

Between Marshall and Ross there is however little dispute that what occurs between the pupil and the school and other pupils is a form a social engagement. When education takes place in a school setting there is an inevitable amount of social interaction between Gypsy pupils and other non-Gypsies, including other pupils, teachers and non-teaching staff. In addition, there is social interaction between Gypsy parents and other parents, pupils and teachers, (particularly at primary school level). This engagement was readily identified and described by respondents as a means of cultural erosion. The culture of non-Gypsies was seen to be privileged above that of Gypsies, with the consequence that Gypsy children were effectively being taught a different culture; a '*gaujo*' culture that whittled away at aspects of their own Gypsy identity.

Discussing citizenship within a European educational context and also in a context in which students are acknowledged to have multiple identities, Ross (2008) argues that 'Citizenship is one of our identities, but it is not solely an identity' (2008:123). This rings true to the perception of Gypsy parents who describe schools as promoting a set of values distinct to their own. The difference highlighted by Gypsy parents and within the wider body of statistics relating to school attendance (OFSTED, 1999; Derrington and Kendall, 2004; Myers et al, 2010), is that as Gypsy children progress through their school careers, a point is reached at which parents determine the impact of a non-Gypsy identity on their children is too great a threat to their own distinct understanding of their culture. The 'citizenship identity' described by Ross (2012) is not greatly embraced within Gypsy identities.

Where schools are promoting a set of values held together under a banner such as 'citizenship', there is a choice about how parents can manage their children engaging with that process. It is easy to envisage non-Gypsy parental conversations that would brace children for engagement with aspects of social conditioning they object to within the school curriculum, in order that the message of the school is mitigated. A non-religious pupil attending a local religious school, could for example quite easily be equipped with the tools necessary to navigate their school career without, on the one hand, offending the school community, or on the other becoming consumed by faith. For Gypsy parents though, the over-arching taught culture of the school appears to overtake their ability to protect what they consider core values about Gypsy culture; frequently this results in parents withdrawing their children from schools.

Levinson and Sparkes (2005) discuss the negative impacts that may be associated with social capital and in reference to what Fukuyama (2001) describes as a 'narrow radius of trust', they suggest the school is an environment in which, 'internal cohesion is established at the expense of outsiders, (this) would appear to be particularly relevant to the Gypsy context' (2005:752). Describing the tensions between accepting and resisting the *status quo* they argue, 'the spectrum between acceptance and resistance of spatial and/or temporal hierarchies becomes imbued with deeper meanings that have far-reaching implications for the home/school interface' (Levinson and Sparkes, 2005:752). In some respects the 'citizenship agenda' reflects the desire of schools, (in turn reflecting the wider desire of the citizens), to impose cultural norms across diverse cohorts of pupils. For Gypsies who come from very cohesive communities that share distinct values and social mores, there is an understandable resistance to the commonly shared ethos taught in schools. In some respects this contributes to a self-perpetuating cycle of behaviours; by resisting the taught norms of a shared ethos (e.g. citizenship), pupils are identified as being difficult and requiring punitive regimes. This in turn creates a school environment in which Gypsy pupils need to demonstrably resist parts of the curriculum.

6.7 Conclusions

Parents often identified a particular failing in schools in how they taught about the rights and respect due to other communities, but specifically failed to accord the same level of respect or similar rights to Gypsies, Mr F. noted,

You find most of the Gypsies, Romany Gypsies, their biggest problem is, we've got no rights.... We're not racist people, but [children's grandmother] used to say, right, blacks used to be slaves, they used to do everything. Today they got human rights. What's the Travellers got? We haven't got any rights.

The interactions between schools and pupils and more widely between schools and families were inherently flawed and this reflected the wider relationship between families and their neighbours. Any engagement between the two was inevitably balanced in favour of the non-Gypsy world; in schools, in dealings with the police or in dealings with a next-door neighbour.

Most respondents described an essentially ambiguous relationship between Gypsies and schools. Education, in the sense of non-Gypsy schooling, was an adaptation that Gypsy families felt they had to make for the future success of their children. The value of schooling was clearly noted because of changing lifestyles and economic conditions. Schooling was regarded as a non-Gypsy form of education, and most families also recognised the importance of education that was generated within their families and communities, (e.g. learning a trade and learning about Gypsy culture). One consequence of engaging with schools however was that often the experience for the family could be highly traumatic. Children who attended schools were routinely called racist names, bullied, treated insensitively by teachers with little or no understanding of Gypsy culture and faced with cultural norms that were perceived as being morally abhorrent

This generational change was demonstrated by the T. family and other families who were balancing values and ideals they held about Gypsy lifestyles, against uncomfortable adaptations that were deemed necessary in order to generate a degree of security. In the case of the T.'s this was not working successfully; despite Mrs T.'s campaigning there was little likelihood in the foreseeable future of an on-site education being provided by the local authority. Some families experienced more positive outcomes, some within the school system and others through privately funded home tutor arrangements. Still other families refused to make the same sorts of adaptations and simply removed their children from schooling at the transition period between primary and secondary school.

The engagement of Gypsy families with schools highlights the problems they face when they are drawn closer to the non-Gypsy world. Becoming closer to some of the core values promoted by schools such as the education of children in terms of social interaction and citizenship values was highly problematic for many families. Chapter 8 considers the relationship between families and citizenship in greater detail.

Notes

1. Golliwogs are black dolls featured in American and British children's literature (see Upton, 1895; Blyton, 1951) and the model for black face minstrels. They are considered to have racist connotations (Kushner, 1999).

Chapter 7 Citizenship

7.1 Introduction

Marshall (1950) suggests that citizenship is a means of engineering a more equitable society in which the state acts to counter market forces in order to promote social justice. This did not reflect the experience of many of the Gypsy families interviewed during this research whose accounts tended to challenge the virtuosity of citizenship. This chapter argues that the relationship between Gypsies and citizenship is constructed differently to that of their non-Gypsy neighbours in at least three different ways.

Firstly that Gypsy families are excluded from citizenship and in some way constituted as *non-citizens*. The chapter argues that Gypsy families are not 'non-citizens' because they are illegally present within a state boundary or because they are statutorily excluded from citizenship status; but rather that the descriptor 'Gypsy', or the fact of *being a Gypsy*, has an adverse affect upon their status of being a citizen. Respondents gave accounts of being excluded from elements of citizenship, (e.g. access to schooling or healthcare), that in principle and statutorily they were entitled to access. Secondly that institutional acts designed to protect the over-arching rights of citizens such as acts of civil repair (Alexander, 2006) and the 'rule of law', operate in ways that do not protect Gypsies because of their non-citizen status. Instead such processes tend to aggressively counter the interests of Gypsies and further delineate boundaries between who is a citizen and who is not a citizen. Finally, that Gypsies use a strong sense of 'community' both as a means of directly confronting the social structures of citizenship and also as a means of regulating their engagement with non-Gypsies. The former protecting Gypsy interests against non-Gypsy aggression, (e.g. forced evictions from sites or bullying at school); whilst the latter enables and contributes to a degree of economic productivity for Gypsies.

7.2 Citizenship and the impact of the institutions of citizenship on Gypsies

Marshall (1950) argues that Citizenship is based on three basic tenets of civil rights, political rights and economic stability; perhaps more importantly he suggests these rights are made tangible through the

institutions of the state, so for example through Parliament, local councils, social services or the education system. However, throughout this research, state institutions that might be associated with promoting citizenship, were invariably described in terms of working against the interests of Gypsies. The police, local planning offices, schools and healthcare providers were all identified as failing to support Gypsy lifestyles.

7.2.1 Policing

One of the clearest examples in this respect is the role of the police. Police Authorities generally derive their powers and responsibilities from the 1996 Police Act, which requires the Secretary of State (at the Home Office) to 'prepare a National Policing Plan' (Part II F 36A (1)). Writing in *The Times*, Nick Herbert, the Conservative MP and Coalition Minister for Policing reflecting upon the widespread rioting across many English cities in August 2011, and the lack of representation of female and ethnic minority police officers, suggested that communities and police needed to work together,

To fight crime successfully, the law needs to be applied even-handedly and with real understanding of the needs of all our communities. Equality – always important – is particularly vital for policing. (Herbert, 2011:25)

Communities and police working together to protect the overarching interests of communities was not the picture that emerged from interviews with Gypsy families. Rather they were seen as an aggressively discriminatory force working against Gypsy interests, (respondents described the police's involvement in evictions, late-night wake-up calls, unnecessary surveillance of sites and stopping of vehicles). They were also seen to protect the rights of non-Gypsies in an unfair, discriminatory manner for example during police involvement in evictions.

Mrs G. described how the actions of the police were in part responsible for her abandoning her previous travelling way of life in favour of remaining on a site,

MM: so why did you stop travelling?

Mrs G: It's easier. People are ok here and you don't get that bang, bang, bang on the door every night.

MM: Sorry..?

Mrs G: Police. Used to get woken up every night.

MM: So why would they be doing that?

Mrs G: Ask them.

Mrs G.'s former lifestyle was based upon her family travelling between a number of locations within two or three counties in the South-East; her family were clearly identifiable as not living within the norms of a sedentary lifestyle. Constant harassment and a seeming desire on the police's part to move the G.'s on, reflects a perception that Gypsies pose a threat to the rights of 'real' citizens. The threat of mobile Gypsy populations to sedentary non-Gypsy populations often materialises in associations made between Gypsies and criminality. Weyrauch (2001) discusses how Gypsy criminality is widely perceived by non-Gypsies and how some aspects of Gypsy culture are misinterpreted by non-Gypsies in ways that reinforce such negative perceptions. Clark makes a direct link between mobility and wider political interests suggesting, 'nomads and the state nearly always represent a conflict of interests, a conflict of government' (2002:183). Within a Marshallian understanding of citizenship the police are an institution that protects the rights of citizens. Living a nomadic lifestyle the G.'s were identifiable as Gypsies *and* non-citizens and as such a threat to other citizens; by moving the G.'s on the police were protecting non-Gypsy citizens.

Throughout the research respondents also emphasised situations in which families whose lifestyles were less visible to non-Gypsies than the G.'s nomadic life were still often harassed by the police. Mrs T. and Mrs K. on the Docks Site, which was situated a long way from non-Gypsy residential areas, described how police vans still regularly visited the site, often late at night driving noisily around with their flashlights on. They went on to describe,

- Mrs T: I mean we get enough of that, 'cause we get the police driving – driving round, drive out all the time don't we?
Mrs K: Yeah. They're here all the time.
MM: They've got time on their hands haven't they?
Mrs T: Yeah. Just come a day to try and find something they can do. Nine times out of 10 they are picking on the kids.
Mrs K: Yeah. If anything goes wrong in the village, they'll come in.
MM: Yeah?
Mrs K: Straight away.

The impression was that the police identified Gypsies in a very general sense as undesirable, rather than identifying particular circumstances in which Gypsies were involved in criminal behaviour. So whilst it might be argued by the police that Mrs G.'s van was moved on from various places because she transgressed the law, this was not the case when the police visited the Docks Site. The random night time visits seemed designed to disturb and disrupt; whilst visits following unrelated events in other nearby non-Gypsy locations, suggested the police were always ready to assume Gypsy criminality was at the root of any reported crime. Nick Herbert's suggestion that the law should be applied 'even-handedly' would for many respondents be regarded as unlikely outcome. However, his suggestion of collaboration between the police

and 'communities' was essentially an accurate description; but with the important proviso, that the communities involved were non-Gypsy 'communities'.

7.2.2 Planning

Another area in which the impact of the perceived undesirability of Gypsies is most apparent, and one in which the institutions of the state are seen to work, is the provision of living spaces within local planning law. In his assessment of the discriminatory practices associated with the implementation of planning law in relation to Gypsies, Field (1999) quotes from a planning inspector's report explaining why a private site was not being allowed planning permission,

"It is therefore clear in my mind that a need exists for more authorised sites...Nevertheless, I consider it important to keep concentration of sites for Gypsies small, because in this way they are more readily accepted by the local community." (1999:114)

Field notes that it would be extraordinary in the case of any other group for their race or ethnicity to be cited as the reason to limit their numbers on a geographical basis, in order to pave the way for easier acceptance by the wider population. The families who participated in my research lived within a hierarchy of national, regional and local development plans, in which the use to which land could be developed and the numbers and types of people accommodated were determined. There was a degree of fluidity within these processes; it was not the case for example that the Secretary of State for Local Government and the Regions, passed down a regional plan to the regional government body, who in turn told local authorities what to do. Instead processes of consultation about land use went on for several years with views being expressed both up and down the chain of local, regional and central government departments.

Of most importance for my research was a consultation process conducted by the South East England Regional Assembly considering Gypsy, Traveller and Travelling Showpeople's accommodation needs within the South East Plan (see SEERA, 2008c), which began in 2006 and which was due to reach its final conclusions in February 2010, (this process was delayed and finally abandoned in the run-up to the general election and subsequent change of Government in 2010). This wide ranging piece of work included a focus-group led consultation exercise with Gypsy families in the South East (RAISE, 2008), a MORI Poll

considering South East resident's opinions, and consultations conducted by local authorities who made their own submissions throughout the process (SEERA, 2008a & 2008b).

Whilst this research was being conducted there was an on-going series of local newspaper stories about the threat posed by Gypsy sites locally which mirrored a national picture in which the media 'condone, encourage and confirm generalising or racist assumptions' (Morris, 2006:238) about Gypsies. Much of the local interest in Gypsies and planning related to the consultation exercise conducted by the South East England Regional Assembly (SEERA) and its emergent recommendations between 2006-2009 (South East England Partnership Board, 2009, Niner, 2009; see also http://www.southeast-ra.gov.uk/sep_gtts.html). SEERA were responsible for developing the regional planning strategy in the South East, (drawing up the South East Development Plan which would reflect central government policy on UK planning). SEERA consisted of representatives drawn from local, town and city councils in the South East. In March 2009, SEERA was disbanded and replaced by the South East Partnership Board. The development plans drawn up by SEERA and later by the South East Partnership Board are formally approved by the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government.

The South East England Partnership Board (2009) published proposed figures for increasing the number of additional (Gypsy) pitches, for which local councils would need to allocate land within their local development plans. These figures have been widely quoted within local newspaper stories generating hostility to Gypsy families being granted planning permission. So for example Arun District Council is shown in the SEERA figures to need to provide an additional 17 pitches within their boundaries by 2016. *The Parish News; Walberton, Binsted & Fontwell*, (three villages within Arun District), for August 2009 noted the need for the Walberton Parish Council to include within their agenda a discussion 'of the very worrying development of possible Gypsy sites in Walberton'. *The Chichester Observer* covered the story of a planning application being refused within Walberton,

Protests by residents were backed by councillors... They also stated they believed allowing the new use for the site would prejudice the outcome of their on-going district-wide study into sites for travellers, showpeople and gypsies. This had identified Little Nova Paddocks as part of a bigger and permanent medium-sized site for six to 12 pitches for gypsies and travellers. The council received 91 letters of objection from individuals. (May 12 2009:4)

This followed an earlier story in *The Chichester Observer* (12 February 2009) which reported a public meeting in which there had been criticism of the inclusion of *Little Nova Paddocks* in a consultation

document (Baker Associates, 2009) produced by Arun District Council looking at potential locations for new Gypsy sites. At around the same time, a briefing note was circulated and posted on the Arun District Council website, by the Clerk to Clapham Parish Council (Morris, 2009), (Clapham is another village within Arun District), which accurately noted the locations of various documents that made up the 2006 West Sussex Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment (GTAA), which was the original work for West Sussex that fed into SEERA's regional plan and listed the potential sites identified by Baker Associates. The briefing note concluded,

And is that it?

Note that DCA, in their reports, on which the Baker Associates study relies, do not consider that the proposed site introductions will meet all future needs. They envisage a growth, after 2011, of 4.8% per annum compound in the numbers of travellers and in their accommodation needs.

Beyond the headlines...

These reports seem to me, on casual acquaintance, to be well-written and (as far as I can judge) well-researched, although admittedly based on small samples and inevitably in social science) subjective data. They are well worth study if the topic interests you.

Finally...

When, earlier this year, I was asked by a researcher for my views on travellers' sites, I stressed the house-holder's legal right to "quiet enjoyment". I think this applies to all of us, whether our homes are mobile or immobile. I hope that the way forward chosen by our hard-pressed Arun DC colleagues will achieve this quiet enjoyment for all, whatever our way of life. (Morris, 2009:4)

The reason for detailing this very local activity within Arun District Council is threefold. Firstly to document and highlight the structural links that exists from the very local to regional and eventually to national policy. Secondly to highlight the amount of local interest generated around issues of planning and Gypsy sites. And, finally to note that Arun District Council was also the home to some respondents in this study who were involved in disputed planning applications with the local council whilst this research was being conducted.

Planning officials and the planning system were regarded as actively working against the needs of Gypsy families often in a specifically racist manner. Mr and Mrs E. for example described how a planning officer changed almost instantaneously from being helpful and polite, to being very distant and unhelpful, when he discovered the E.'s were in fact Gypsies and that part of their planning application would relate to their requirements as a Gypsy family.

Mr E.: After that he wouldn't even drink our tea....

When the E.'s application for planning permission was received by the council, it like all applications was published on-line by the council. Unlike other applications it contained a substantial quantity of personal

information about the E. family's domestic situation in order to substantiate their claim that they were in fact Gypsies. So for example Mrs E.'s family history, her employment details and the names and school details of her children, (who, up until this time attended school without revealing their Gypsy background), were published online by the local council. Noting that any objections lodged by private individuals against their application would not be published online Mrs E. noted,

It's not fair. Really. I have to put all my details up there so everyone can see. And now the whole village knows our business. We've been here six years and nobody cared who we were and now it's everybody's business how we live our lives.

One year later the E's found themselves again the focus of a public campaign to have changes to their planning permission refused, photocopied notices encouraging their neighbours to write to the council to dispute minor changes were widely distributed by hand to households in adjacent villages. The E.'s found themselves targeted at a local Parish Council meeting by neighbours, who suggested the presence of a Gypsy site would cause an increase in traffic disruption, pollution and adversely affect house prices. It should be noted that prior to being identified as Gypsies the E's led quiet lives and enjoyed good relationships with many of the people who later complained either in writing to the council or in person at the Parish Council,

I spoke to them all. I went round to their houses and said this is what we are doing and you know us and we've never had a problem. The next thing they started sending these notes through people's doors. (Mrs E.)

Over twenty individual complaints were eventually lodged with the District Council about the E.'s proposed developments.

The planning process was weighted heavily against Gypsies both through technical requirements, such as the need to make public details of their private lives whilst retaining anonymity for anyone who wished to challenge their planning application; and, more generically in the support given citizens at local, regional and national level to challenge Gypsy planning applications. What emerged was a political process in which citizens were empowered to the exclusion of non-citizen Gypsies. National and regional policy was endlessly delayed, and finally put on hold, when it became apparent the general election would in all probability return a change of Government. In consequence although the need for additional pitches and sites for Gypsies was identified this never translated into local activity that would create new sites. At the same time individuals wishing to agree planning permission to develop their own land were effectively prevented from doing so by the opposition of their neighbours.

7.2.3 Education, health and the wider picture of Gypsy engagement with institutions associated with citizenship

Similar understandings to those around the role of police and the relationship with local government in terms of planning also emerged in relation to other institutions. Within education for example secondary schools were generally considered by respondents to be unsafe places, in which Gypsy children would encounter racism and non-Gypsy immorality, (and this is also reflected within wider literature, Department for Education and Skills, 2003; Myers et al, 2010). Secondary schools in particular have been identified as institutions designed to serve the needs of non-Gypsies (Bhopal, 2011). Respondents also highlighted how engagement with different aspects of non-Gypsy institutions had over-lapping consequences; Mrs E. for example described the wider impact her engagement with planning processes had on her eldest son who would soon be transferring from primary to secondary school,

No one knew anything about us before and now he's being picked on. [A boy in his class] said 'you live in a shed – you stink'. If he gets that at [name of Secondary School] then he's out. (Mrs E.)

Respondents also expressed concern about the reception they faced when accessing health services, Mrs Q. noted that as soon as her name was announced in the surgery waiting room at her local doctors, all eyes turned towards her,

It's like they all know our name. I want to say 'Yeah? What are you going to say?' Either that or change my name.

As it happened Mrs Q. had a relatively common name for both Gypsies and non-Gypsies, and what she appeared to be describing was a sense in which local knowledge, that perhaps of the surgery reception staff and other patients was part of a pooled bank of assumptions that characterised her engagement with 'official' institutions. This reflected a wider picture in which the work of institutions and official bodies were seen to be irrevocably linked to the interests of other communities and not to the interests of Gypsy families. Returning to Nick Herbert, Minister for Policing, in 2010 he explicitly linked the Coalition's government wider policy around citizenship to his understanding of an effective model of policing,

The Coalition's programme for government speaks of 'a Big Society matched by big citizens'. Part of that means fostering a resurgence in community activism to galvanise action by local groups,

encouraging communities to share responsibility for making their neighbourhoods safer. (Herbert, 2010:6)

Herbert underlines the importance of grouping understandings of terminology such as 'citizenship', 'community' and 'policing' under a single umbrella. The consequence for groups such as Gypsies, whose community is not clearly embraced under this umbrella, is that they also fail to be included as citizens and fail to have their interests policed or their needs met by local authorities.

7.3 Gypsies as non-citizens

The Gypsy families interviewed for this research tended to keep the institutions of the state at a distance, in much the same way that they kept their non-Gypsy neighbours at a distance. Engaging with the state as the active participatory citizens described by Turner (2001) was not a picture that emerged from respondents. So, for example, engaging with planning departments was generally about fighting against the state and against neighbours who wished to move families off the land they were currently living on. Similarly, an engagement with the education system was often about working to retain a distinct set of family and community values in the face of the school system, in order to gain the educational benefits considered important by the family, rather than those considered necessary by schools. And, finally dealings with the police were about resisting or side-lining their efforts to make life uncomfortable rather than engaging with community officers.

Many families explicitly noted how typical entitlements that might be understood to emerge from politics based around citizenship (Marshall, 1950; Turner, 2001) were denied to Gypsies. Mr B. described his own recollections of going to school;

No one wanted us in the schools then. Not the teachers. No one. I went once or twice and stopped going.

The B.'s like many Gypsy families had persisted with primary school education for their children, but felt that following the transition to secondary school they were faced by similar attitudes to those encountered by Mr B,

Mr B: No one says it to your face but when [daughter in year 8] was being picked on you could see it.

Mrs B: Her teacher was dim or something. She couldn't talk to me.

MM: What did the school do?

Mrs B: Nothing. They don't want her there.

Similarly Mrs Z. noted the difficulties faced accessing health care when her husband fell ill during the night and she requested a doctor visit her on the Hill Site,

We called for a doctor but they wouldn't come on the site. Said we had to go to casualty. I mean, if you lived in a house and the doctor refused to see you. You could sue them all. But if you live on a site it's a different thing altogether.

Even though all the local council and city councils in which respondents lived had very specific guidance and published service levels that promised the delivery of specific services, they appeared not to apply uniformly to all Gypsies. There was a similar disjuncture between local authorities who carried Human Rights legislation on their websites and what materialised on the ground. Locally what emerges is the sense that the attitudes and the opinions of people who live in proximity to Gypsies take precedence over commitments to, for example, human rights legislation in the application of policy by local authorities.

Mr and Mrs B. noted that their son was invariably blamed for trouble at his school or on the estate where they lived; they felt that although he was often involved in many incidents, (such as fights and vandalism), he was no more or less culpable than other children,

Mr B.: Every time something happens – he's the one who takes the blame.

Mrs B.: Always. They always say he started it and that's it...

MM: Other parents?

Mrs B.: And the police.

Mr B.: It's true.

Mrs B.: They don't even bother to talk to the other boys here.

In another case the E.'s explained the impact of local voices being heard in opposition to their planning application to remain in a caravan on land they owned,

Mrs E.: I spoke to the parish council but they said they had a meeting last week and objected to us.

MM: Why though?

Mrs E.: They said they object to anything to do with caravans...but round here how many caravans are there tucked behind people's houses. Anyway I told him about us and how we had been living there for ages and he said he wished he had known a bit about us before...

MM: But they've still put the objection in?

Mrs E.: Yeah.

MM: What about your neighbours?

Mrs E.: Loads of objections. And they're the ones who get listened to. Not us.

The main concern raised in such conversations is the sense that whilst human rights policy or national policy might suggest the need for non-discriminatory policing, or for planning decisions to be made in an objective fashion, at a very local level the over-arching policy is undermined. What is important in this respect is the sense that it is not a failure of policy-makers and policy that leads to the continued discrimination of Gypsies. Rather it is the continued discrimination of other citizens and the influence they are able to exert as 'citizens' upon state institutions such as the police or planning departments. It is local non-Gypsies who heavily influence local planning decisions and policing decisions in their interests.

Much of the implementation of legislation that directly impacts on Gypsy lives is determined at a very local level such as parish or district councils. One consequence is a seemingly greater direct influence from neighbours and fellow citizens upon the interests of Gypsies.

7.4 Social Justice and Gypsy engagements with the state

Alexander (2006) suggests the institutionalisation of the law allows for the breakdown of exclusive community barriers and for the promotion of more tolerant communal values shared universally and beyond self-interest groups. For Gypsy groups this might be viewed either negatively or potentially in a positive fashion. On the one hand the importance of self-interested community and family values, which were widely described by most respondents might be threatened by such liberal regulation. On the other hand many respondents also described how their Gypsy neighbours were not all perfect and that they did not regard community membership as membership of an all-encompassing group of good '*communards*'. So Mr M. typically described other residents of the Rife Site,

You get good and bad same as anywhere. It's as simple as that. I'm not going to pretend everyone's perfect here. Some are. Some are very bad though.

In some ways the acknowledgment of living amongst different types of people might have indicated that legal enforcement could be useful to Gypsies; the law in principle representing the best intentions of political and social management, shaped by the historic development of rights based legislation. That is legislation that has engaged with recognition of individuals and their place within a 'civil sphere', (i.e. a liberal perspective that to greater and lesser degree has been extant at least since Rousseau talked of '*le sentiment de l'existence*' (1959:1047)). However, Mr M., like other respondents suggested involving the police in any dispute or indeed any area of life on a Gypsy site would never be countenanced,

That's a big no no. The police do nothing for us. (Mr M.)

And in a later discussion with Mr Y. about the possibility of his arranging access on a discrete research project funded by West Sussex Police:

I couldn't do that. My name. It would get round and my name would be mud. I won't touch anything with the police. Mr Y.)

Okely (2005) notes how Gypsies would generally go to great lengths to assist other Gypsies, (and in some cases even non-Gypsies), who were in trouble with the police; in particular, in order to avoid the ultimate pollution of being incarcerated in a *gaujo* prison. She also notes however instances where the police are discreetly involved in disputes, as a means of bringing a third party into the equation capable of either averting more serious consequences, (e.g. breaking up a fight), or to displace blame onto a third party outside of the community.

Another possible means in which legal enforcement could be regarded as useful for Gypsies would be the non-sectarian application of the 'rule of law' as a means of regulating non-Gypsies. In other words if the law was used to protect Gypsy interests. As widely noted throughout the findings this viewpoint was never promoted by any of my respondents. Their evidence tended to suggest that the law was used institutionally in an aggressive way to harass and unsettle Gypsy populations. It very rarely materialised as a non-sectarian regime that could be relied upon to act impartially in the lives of Gypsies and non-Gypsies. Only one occasion was mentioned when the actions of a police officer supported a respondent, (see Chapter 6 for discussion of Mrs S. experience of a policeman informing a school that her child was the victim of racist abuse). Generally however, legal frameworks were seen to not work in the interest of Gypsies; they were not liberal regimes that could improve their lives and relations with neighbours but rather illiberal regimes that offered protection to non-Gypsy neighbours. The distinction of being a citizen or a non-citizen made a dramatic difference in policing and legal enforcement; with suggestions of a 'cosmopolitanization' or global human rights not being evidenced by respondents.

7.5 Conclusions

In almost all discussions with respondents, state institutions that might be associated with citizenship, (police, schools, health authorities and town planners), were identified in negative ways. They either worked to disrupt the lives of Gypsies or they were seen to fail to deliver comparable levels of service to those normally expected by non-Gypsies. Many respondents seemingly grouped their experiences of such institutions together; they were understood as a cumulative representation of the non-Gypsy world. Mr B. for example quickly conflated some particular issues he experienced with schools and a local surgery within a much wider experience of living amongst non-Gypsies,

- Mr B.: It's a steady push, push, push. Everything is an issue and you don't get that do you? You don't wake up and have to think how are you going to get some medicine today.
- MM: No, but...
- Mr B.: We have to work it all. That's why I'd get out. Live in the middle of nowhere and not deal with any of them.
- MM: Who? Schools?
- Mr B: *Gaujos*. All of you.

Returning to Marshall and the political changes that occurred following the Second World War, institutions that reflected citizens' rights and entitlements such as schools or the National Health Service were seen to be in opposition to the lives of Gypsies. Examples of politicians publicly wishing to be associated with the removal of universal entitlement to health care or compulsory education until the age of sixteen are few and far between. Similarly the funding of police and prison services is a political 'hot potato', because support for such work is clearly regarded by the public as overwhelmingly in the interests of citizens. This was recently demonstrated when the Conservative Justice Minister, Ken Clarke, found himself unable to defend budgetary cuts to police numbers or reductions in sentencing for knife crimes to cabinet colleagues, (see Financial Times 2011a & 2011b, '*Clarke U-Turn on knife crime sentencing*'). Gypsies regard the liberal work of the police to act as protectors, or of schools and the Health Service to help citizens, differently. As non-citizens Gypsies did not feel the same sense of protection or entitlement that might generally be experienced by many non-Gypsies.

Alexander (2006) describes 'acts of civil repair' as one means by which it is possible to remedy social injustices and this might be typified by the ODPM circular 2006/01 which tried to promote more flexible planning procedures for Gypsies at a local level. In practice these attempts at civil repair rarely have their intended impact. As mentioned above, one application for planning permission within Arun district resulted

in 91 objections, and was promptly not allowed to go forward. In this case the civil repair was perhaps that of ensuring non-Gypsies are able to maintain the *status quo* in their living arrangements. In many respects, and this again seems to underline the sense in which Gypsies are non-citizens, acts of civil repair are more likely to be apparent in the successes of real citizens, such as the non-Gypsy population's ability to successfully challenge the impact of the ODPM circular, or to maintain openly racist attitudes within schools. The 'act of civil repair' in the planning example, is to repair the potential 'damage' a Gypsy site might have upon non-Gypsy neighbours, by ensuring planning permission is not granted. This highlights the positioning of Gypsies outside the boundaries of citizenship and consequently falling outside the boundary of the nation-state.

Citizenship emerged in the lives of respondents as a discourse that belonged to other groups of people and not to Gypsies. The institutions that were associated with citizenship were the institutions that protected or promoted the interests of other people, (not Gypsies), who could be classed as citizens. Gypsies did not perceive that these institutions would protect or promote their interests, as they were effectively non-citizens. As non-citizens, Gypsies were positioned as a group of people who the state needed to keep at a distance from those regarded as citizens in order to protect them; institutions such as police authorities or health authorities acted to protect citizens from Gypsies.

Chapter 8 Gypsies, Community and Neighbours

8.1. Introduction

This chapter considers in detail the local relations between Gypsy and non-Gypsy neighbours and the response of Gypsies to their hostile reception amongst a non-Gypsy population. It considers the maintenance of strong communal networks as a means of counteracting the impact of actions of non-Gypsies and state institutions. Whilst there is clearly a relationship between local, national and international relations between Gypsies and non-Gypsies, this chapter focuses on the local relationships between Gypsy families living on the south coast and their non-Gypsy 'neighbours'. Such a local view highlights narrative accounts specific to the respondents in the research as well as within the over-arching discourses of citizenship.

This chapter also examines Gypsy narratives of what constitutes being good or bad neighbours. To a certain extent, these accounts are seen in distinction to the linkage between 'good neighbours' and 'good citizens', that emerge within the discourses and terminology of citizenship; and also, in accounts that describe Gypsies as both 'bad neighbours' and 'non-citizens'. This chapter continues to demonstrate how within local setting Gypsies are framed as non-citizens and how this is part of a wider perception in which negative stereotypes about Gypsies are given credence.

The chapter begins with an account of the community relationships between groups of families living close to each other, before moving onto a more general discussion of respondents. It examines the use of strong community membership as an alternative to membership of broadly defined groups of citizens and identifies the literal understanding many families described of being community members compared to the idealised and imagined communities that characterise citizens more generally.

8.2 A snapshot of life on the south coast for Gypsy families

This section examines a group of families who lived in fairly close proximity to each other both on the local authority owned Rife Site and on the adjacent Old Farm Site that was owned by the L.'s and used for both

accommodation and employment purposes. In concentrating on these particular families, the broader relations between Gypsies and non-Gypsies are examined. Respondents were asked to talk about their lives and their day-to-day relations with their neighbours, both Gypsies and non-Gypsies. In most cases fairly detailed accounts were given that emphasised instances where individuals felt they encountered discrimination from non-Gypsies or were treated badly by them.

Mr M. described in some detail why the Rife Site that housed his family suited him. Most of the reasons he gave for enjoying life on the site reflected similar thoughts to those expressed by other families on this and other sites. He noted that it was very quiet and secluded and that he knew and largely respected other families living on the site. Geographically, the site was well located with road links to one small town in particular where his family did most of their daily and weekly shopping. Looking further afield it was easy enough to get to larger cities and towns including Brighton, Chichester, Portsmouth and Southampton, which were important for social activities or when shopping for more expensive items, (Mr M. suggesting such purchases were largely on behalf of Mrs M.). Also, transport links to the M25 were suitable for Mr M.'s work patterns, which in the past had mostly been conducted within the M25, though he noted that for the last year he had been working closer to home with Mr L., (his Gypsy neighbour who owned the adjoining Old Farm Site). It was only when discussing his neighbours beyond the site that Mr M. really identified issues that made him unhappy. Talking about the people from two neighbouring small towns he said,

- | | |
|-------|--|
| Mr M. | To be honest I don't go to [town name] these days. It's gone down the pan anyway there's nothing there. Shithole really. In the summer it's just full of day-trippers but right now it's dead and the people there are just...[they] look for trouble. [Another nearby town] is better. It's a busier place so people mind their own business. Lots of trouble there in the evenings though. |
| MM | Trouble with you? |
| Mr M. | No. Just in general... |
| MM | And what about locally in [two local villages]? |
| Mr M. | What? Is there trouble? |
| MM | No what are they like? The people round here? Your neighbours? |
| Mr M. | Well we could be a million miles away. They wouldn't come up here [i.e. on the site], knocking on my door to say hello would they? |
| MM | No. But do you see much of the people round here? |
| Mr M | No. |

Mr M. went on to explain that although he was currently working with Mr L., in the past when he worked he tended not to do so in the immediate area, but preferred to travel to locations inside the M25, (about 50-70 miles and an hour drive away). As a result, he avoided contact with his neighbours through work, when asked why he would choose to work further afield, (Mr M. was a tree surgeon and landscape gardener), he suggested that there was very little work locally and that it was far easier to find occasional jobs, that would

take one to three days to complete, in more urban or suburban areas where there was a greater density of houses. There was a geographical demarcation between non-Gypsies Mr M. might have employment links with, (i.e. inside the M25), and those who he might meet locally, (i.e. his neighbours). Ironically those neighbours he lived in closest proximity to outside of the site itself were characterised as being 'a million miles away'. The non-Gypsies he had the most dealings with were those for whom he arranged to work and these, geographically speaking, were located furthest away. Closer to home he had non-work related weekly encounters at supermarkets or shopping centres, though again somewhat at a distance from his home, (smaller and medium size towns were within 5 to 10 miles from his home and larger cities such as Brighton, Portsmouth and Southampton were all further away).

We talked about a local beach at another nearby village that is a well-known and popular destination for families in the area, (its principle attractions are its cleanliness, sandy beaches and a reputation for being well-known to local people but not so well-known and somewhat inaccessible to visiting holidaymakers). Mr M. noted his family did not use this beach because they had once had an argument with the owners of the (only) café on the beach. Mr M. would not discuss the reasons for the argument and initially said it was nothing to do with his being a Gypsy, (and by inference it was nothing to do with me or the research). However, he later returned to the subject and said,

At [village name] that wasn't very nice because it was like a family thing. Anyone would have had an argument with them because they were rude bastards. But they called the police on us because they knew we'd be in worse than them. They wouldn't have done that with someone else. They just thought they could give us a hard time. (Mr M.)

Mrs M. went on to explain in a little more detail what had happened. The M.'s and their extended family, (Mr & Mrs M., their two children, Mr M.'s father, Mrs M.'s sister and husband and their children), had decided to spend the day at the seaside and at some stage when ordering fish and chips something had been said to Mr M.'s father who was relatively elderly. Mr M. had taken offence at what was said and this led to an argument with the café owners. Mrs M. was unclear about exactly what was said to her father-in-law, though she made it clear the café owners had not said something that was specifically racist; however, she felt they were rude to him because the family were seen to be Gypsies.

Mr M. then continued and suggested that generally they would never go to this particular beach but preferred to go a bit further down the coast,

It's too local, they all know who we are, so even if they don't say anything to your face it's uncomfortable. We only went because her sister was down for the day. (Mr M.)

In a slight contradiction Mr M. also suggested that wherever they went they would be recognisable as Gypsies,

We can't hide who we are. I can't and she can't. Other people maybe are different but everyone knows we are Travellers. (Mr M.)

Within the family, the memory of the daytrip to the local beach held a great deal of significance, partly because it was obviously a horrible and unpleasant day, but also because it was associated with understandings about their neighbours. The events of that day were part of the family's narrative account of where they lived and the people who lived near them.

When asked about other contact they might have with people living in close proximity Mr M. suggested there was very little daily contact and he repeated that he could be 'a million miles' away from his neighbours. I asked him about a local pub, and he agreed that he was known in the pub, (although not a regular), and that if anything his wife went there more regularly. Mrs M. explained that in the summer she and some of the other mothers on the site often went to the pub because their children could play in the pub garden, (there are permanent climbing frames for children in the pub garden and throughout the summer there is a bouncy castle). She also noted that Mr M. and other men from the site were regular visitors to the pub and that other Gypsy families from another nearby village also used the pub quite frequently,

- Mrs M.: We're quite well known there. I mean it's a quiet place I don't think it would still be open if we weren't in and out.
- MM: Do you go to the [another nearby local Harvester pub/steakhouse]?
- Mrs M.: We went for a steak....just once. Rubbish food. For *gaufjos*.
- MM: What about in [neighbouring village]?
- Mrs M.: No
- Mr M.: I'll tell you why not if you want?
- MM: ok
- Mr M.: There's two pubs in [the neighbouring village]. You got the [pub name], you know the [pub name], well [recently deceased landlord's name] he was ok but when he died his wife took over. She won't serve me. Won't serve Travellers.
- MM: I'm surprised at that, they seem a bit weird in there but ok.
- Mr M.: I'm telling you they won't sell a Traveller a beer. Quite polite about it but she won't have me through the door.
- MM: Why not?
- Mr M.: Just won't. It's just the woman there. Anyway you know the [other pub in the same village]? Full of gangsters?
- MM: from [Name of nearby prison]? [this pub has a reputation for being used for accommodation for visitors to a nearby open prison]
- Mr M.: You know then. You can get anything in there. Not our sort of place.

The local pubs were demarcated into a specific geography; there were venues that welcomed Gypsies and were overwhelmingly used by them; venues that actively discriminated against Gypsies; and, neutral venues that were regarded as *gaujo* spaces. Both neutral venues were described in negative terms; the food in the steakhouse was considered poor and the other pub regarded as representing the worst aspects of non-Gypsy society. Only the very local pub that relied on Gypsy trade for its survival was regarded positively.

Discussing other shops and amenities in the area Mrs M. made it clear that she preferred not to use the local shops, in particular she described how the manager of the nearby small Co-op made her feel very uncomfortable, 'he follows you round the shop, it's like I'm going to steal a pint of milk off him'. We also talked about the M.'s relations with the local secondary school, (their two children had been withdrawn from school the previous year),

- Mrs M.: The teachers there were ok. I never spoke to them much because it's not like primary school, they [the M's children] wouldn't want you hanging round for them at the gates obviously. But, [eldest, daughter], was bullied all the time. I knew their parents and they didn't like being told [by the teacher] about what happened. They kept it up though and we had enough and took them both out of school.
- MM: What were the other parents like at the school?
- Mrs M.: They just think we're scum.
- MM: Really?
- Mrs M.: Yeah.

I have included a substantial amount from the interview with the M.'s because it highlights the range of different circumstances that one particular family experienced of their non-Gypsy neighbours and in some ways demonstrates how such contact still reflects a sense of distance being maintained. The local world (of non-Gypsies) was consistently described in terms of distrust and as representing a source of on-going discomfort for Gypsy families. It was a world in which many seemingly neutral spaces were regarded as being hostile and unwelcoming to Gypsies. The relationships described by the M.'s were mirrored in the accounts given by their Gypsy neighbours about the type of locality they lived in. Mrs N. for example, who lived in a trailer two down from the M.'s, also talked about the same local Co-op,

- Mrs N.: He [the Co-Op manager] never says anything to your face but you know...he'll take your money....[Mrs N. shrugged her shoulders and seemed to call a halt on this part of the conversation.]
- MM: you still shop there though?
- Mrs N.: [waving a packet of cigarettes at me] This morning!

Later Mrs N. was asked to explain how she knew that her Gypsy background was the source of a problem with the manager in the Co-op, if he never said anything that was overtly offensive or racist to her face. Mrs

N. stated, "I just know", and went on to describe other occasions where she had encountered racism. These included recollections of her childhood, when her family travelled during the summer months, and it had been commonplace for people to shout abuse at her family when they stopped at the roadside. Also when she was in school she encountered name-calling by other pupils, and very recently in a pub/club in a nearby seaside town, she and some friends had again been called names (e.g. pikey, Gyppo, scum). Mrs N. was clearly deeply sensitised to racism towards Gypsies, which was understandable bearing in mind her past experiences and those of other family members and close friends all of whom had similar experiences. In this context a remark such as "I just know", carried with it a far greater weight than might be assumed; it underlined a feeling that being discriminated against was a routine indignity rather than an unpleasant one-off incident.

All the women interviewed from this locality referred to the distrustful attitude of the manager and other staff at the Co-Op, (and this reflected accounts given by other respondents in other locations about their own local shops and pubs). Respondents suggested that within these local circumstances, they were identifiable as Gypsies or 'from the site', and this affected how they were treated. Mrs N. suggested that one reason the Co-Op manager never said anything offensive to her face was that he was probably scared of people who lived on the site, not all of whom she suggested were as laid-back as she was. Explaining that although there was nothing to be "scared of", about her personally, she went on to suggest, (in a slightly ambivalent way), that there were all sorts of different people living on the site. When asked whether it might perhaps be useful to appear relatively aggressive in some situations such as dealing with hostile shopkeepers Mrs N. refused to comment. However, her sister (Mrs? O.) who I only met once during this interview suggested,

- Mrs O.: Be confident really. If you look at us we all seem confident.
 MM: Yeah. That's probably what I mean...
 Mrs O.: [describing a third sister of Mrs O. and Mrs N. who was not present] she's something else altogether
 MM: Very Confident?
 Mrs O.: Yeah. She'll just say anything to your face. If she doesn't like you she'll tell you. If you've got an ugly face she'll let you know.

Interviewing Mrs N. and Mrs O. I personally felt their responses to me, both in terms of what they said and how they said it, could potentially be construed as quite aggressive. The description by Mrs O. of 'confidence' seemed to acknowledge, in an ironic and self-aware sense, that she and her sister often gave an impression of aggression, (though perhaps a form of aggression that could be seen through as largely non-threatening!).

Mr and Mrs L. who owned and lived on the private Old Farm Site also briefly discussed their contacts with local people. Essentially they had no contact with the local shopkeepers, preferring to do all their shopping in bigger supermarkets situated in the more substantial nearby towns. Their only direct neighbours were Gypsies on the Rife Site and a farmer who owned much of the surrounding land. They maintained good relations with the farmer, (who was not a Gypsy), from whom they had originally purchased the land for the site and described a longstanding relationship with him that predated their purchase of the land. They had also maintained good relations with the local school, but encountered some problems with the parents of children who bullied the L.'s younger son, (Mrs L. had visited the parents' homes and got into a series of arguments with these parents). However, Mrs L. suggested these were not related to their Gypsy background, but simply something that happens when boys are growing up.

The L.'s appeared to be one of the wealthier families interviewed; they owned land, houses and a warehouse, and Mr L. gave the appearance of running a busy and successful operation. In many respects the family appeared to use their wealth to their advantage, as a means of keeping their affairs very much to themselves; both their housing and work arrangements were very discretely organised away from the main road and prying eyes. Mrs L. and her sister, who also lived on the site, both drove and had access to their own cars, making them less reliant on the local shops than some other families, (and women in particular), living on the adjacent site. They therefore had a degree of choice and independence about where they went shopping. This contrasted with women such as Mrs N. who did not have access to their own cars and relied on getting lifts when she needed to visit the shops.

When first interviewed Mrs L. was very reticent and to begin with almost denied being a Gypsy or having any Gypsy background at all. Only as her interview progressed did she make clear that her husband was a Gypsy, and later that both she and her husband all shared a similar English Romany background. The reticence she displayed about their background when being interviewed typified their other relationships with non-Gypsies. Unusually the family did not for example manage their dealings with the local school through the Traveller Education Service, as this would highlight their ethnic background to the school staff. This was a source of some consternation for their children who believed that they could be entitled to days out of school on the basis of their background. It underlined however, a feeling that the family were better off maintaining a high degree of privacy and that where possible it was better that they should go unnoticed rather than be identified as a Gypsy family.

As a family, the L.'s had significant status amongst other Gypsy families who lived locally, in particular on the adjoining authority site where several of the residents relied to a greater or lesser extent on the L.'s business to generate their own income. This relationship appeared to be managed very sensitively. Other Gypsy men never described Mr L. as their employer and he himself described these relationships in terms of mutual ventures. The only people described by Mr L. in terms of an employer/employee relationship were casual non-Gypsy labourers engaged by him. To a casual observer however it would appear that the economic activity being generated was entirely dependent upon Mr L.'s large warehouse, his land and various business ventures. Throughout the research many respondents described how they would like to live in a similar style to that of the L.s, (i.e. on their own private land and with a successful business).

Despite running a large business from the premises on his land and despite being engaged in multiple relationships with other Gypsies and non-Gypsies relating to that business; the L.s were probably one of the least recognisable families to their immediate non-Gypsy neighbours. In part, and as discussed in Chapter 4, this was because they lived within their own space, which was deliberately shielded from the wider world. But more importantly, it was the management of relations with the non-Gypsy world; their children attended a school two or three miles away but were not overtly identified as Gypsies; they did not engage on a daily basis with local amenities or shops; and, apart from dealings with other Gypsy families and the farm owner who had sold them land they had no other contact with their local non-Gypsy neighbours. Mr L.'s business dealings with non-Gypsies were based on national and international connections facilitated by transport links that were well situated in relation to his home and business premises.

The L.s put in place various strategies that separated them from the non-Gypsy world. In some part this reflected their ability to manage their personal circumstances because of their wealth. Other families from the site adopted similar strategies but were less successful in implementing them. The reasons for their lack of success included their lack of personal wealth and resources; this forced the families to rely more heavily on local amenities such as local shops for their daily needs. It also contributed to their greater visibility to non-Gypsies; whereas the L.s had purchased a discrete and secure location on which to lead their private and public lives. Families living on the local authority site were more visible and recognisable to non-Gypsies as members of the Gypsy community. One impact of visibility as opposed to invisibility was the sense in which the L.s maintained a degree of reticence, (for example when their children attended school), whereas families on the site were much more open about their Gypsy background. All the children from the site, for

example, were identified as Gypsies to schools and all their families, to a greater or lesser extent, used the Traveller Education Service to manage their relations with schools.

Whilst the differences in families' presentation of themselves to the world varied considerably, one constant factor was the separation described between Gypsies and their non-Gypsy neighbours. The non-Gypsy world was understood, and evidenced to be, hostile and discriminatory towards Gypsies. At best this was managed in terms of creating distance between Gypsies and their non-Gypsy neighbours; where it was not possible to create such distance, there was an expectation that the hostility of non-Gypsies would materialise. This materialisation was accepted as happening in very unfair terms because although it might reflect individual bigotry and discrimination, (e.g. by neighbours and shopkeepers), it was condoned institutionally, (e.g. by the police or schools).

The outsider status of Gypsies in the research was readily apparent and seemed, in the first place, not to be dictated by choices made by Gypsies. However, where families had the resources to make greater choices about their lives, such as the L.'s, they still chose to remain as outsiders distinct from the non-Gypsy world. The choices made by Gypsies often seemed to materialise as embracing an insider status within the 'Gypsy community' and a parallel maintenance of outsider status in relation to non-Gypsies.

8.3 Gypsies and community: community as the alternative to citizenship

Discussing their relationships with their neighbours, all respondents to some degree discussed notions of community. Generally community and membership of the Gypsy community in particular was understood in terms of the following:

- Ethnicity and parental background (though this was far from an exclusive category);
- Shared social and family networks;
- Shared lifestyle choices (such as those around work and accommodation);
- Shared cultural norms (about morality and acceptable behaviour);
- Language (for some but by no means all families the use of Anglo-Romany was an indicator of identity); and,

- Shared sense of persecution by the wider state/population.

Close, shared connections within family networks, extended family networks and other Gypsy groups, shaped descriptions of the Gypsy community as a self-interest group of like-minded people, who understood each other's values and worked to protect their mutual interests. It was also understood as a means of recognising the value of Gypsy culture and identity *amongst* Gypsies; even if outside of the community group, they were misrecognised or portrayed in terms of inaccurate stereotypes. The emphasis upon recognising the strength and qualities of Gypsy culture did not chime with Taylor's (1992) description of a 'politics of recognition'. Largely this was because recognition was constructed in an insular fashion in which the importance of community was held up for the benefit of members of the community, rather than as means of engaging with those outside of the community. Similarly, the recognition of Gypsy culture by community members would not function in the way described by Young (2001), as it would not force the dominant culture to look at itself as a specific and singular group. The sense of community that respondents described explicitly criticised non-Gypsy culture for its lack of community and identified problems that occurred as a direct result of this lack of community,

The difference is we know who's here. I know everyone here. You don't get that anywhere else. You get Uncle Jack or whoever, who nobody knows and he's a kiddy botherer. You wouldn't know. Doesn't happen with Travellers – we know who we are. (Mrs C.)

Mrs C. also noted how, in respect to child safety there were prominent, hand painted signs demanding drivers reduce their speed whilst on the site. The site and the Gypsy community were understood as offering protection to small children who were entitled to community protection. The non-Gypsy world was portrayed as being unable to offer the same levels of protection because of its lack of community knowledge. Many respondents noted, generally in scathing terms the anonymity of non-Gypsy lives.

A sense of community was also regularly described as important because it strengthened the confidence of respondents when faced with difficulties in their lives, (and most respondents did identify difficulties in their lives because of their Gypsy status). In this respect, Gypsy constructions of community in many ways resembled the gay community in the 1980/90s who, faced with the threat of AIDS and intolerance from the dominant heterosexual society constructed a sense of identity within their community, Weeks (2000) describes how,

The strongest sense of community is in fact likely to come from those groups who find the premises of their collective existence threatened and who construct out of this a community of identity which provides a strong sense of resistance and empowerment. (2000:240).

In this respect the inability to influence or change the threats to community produce an inward-looking culture, but also a very robust community. As a response to the political and social institutions of the state, those that have been identified as related to citizenship for example, the use of community is an ambivalent response. On the one hand, strengthening Gypsy communities in terms of their resilience towards the outside world and by a refusal to assimilate; but on the other hand, failing to politically engage with the benefits that might accrue from becoming citizens and emphasising and antagonising the sense of difference between citizens and non-citizens. Within the non-Gypsy citizen's analysis of Gypsy communities there is the potential to portray Gypsies not in terms of their diminished rights but rather in terms of their failure to meet their obligations.

All of the people living on the Rife Site made reference to their comfortable relations with other people living on the site and also with a wider network of Gypsy families that included the L.'s, (the family who owned the adjacent land), and other families on the south coast. Many stressed that whilst not all their neighbours on the site were necessarily good people, they were very well known people who understood each other. Although respondents were rarely the first to use the term 'community' in interviews, they consistently described a sense of social organisation that more generally could be understood as a version of community. In addition when the word 'community' was introduced into an interview, it held positive connotations for respondents and was understood as an accurate term used to describe the social relationships in place between different families living on the site and nearby.

As discussed, respondents negotiated aspects of their identity differently depending on particular circumstances, and the strongest representation of 'being a Gypsy' seemed apparent when surrounded by other community members. Identity was in part shaped by the spatial dimension of being associated with the 'site' and of being close (physically/spatially) to other community members. This was made apparent by respondents who would invariably comment, that should I visit another site to conduct interviews, I should mention their name as, 'everyone knows me there'. Similarly Mr Y. explained the importance within Gypsy culture of sharing knowledge; he described a recent trip to Epsom, (for the horse races), in which he had sat together with many friends discussing and sharing information and plans for the future. Mr Y. also spoke about similar *ad hoc* occasions where he had met with Gypsies for the first time, (in the UK and abroad), and

again stressed the importance of sitting down and talking. The emphasis was invariably on having close physical contact and that sites were the one location in which this could flourish to the greatest extent.

Bauman (2001) refers to community as a 'paradise lost'; it is a nostalgically driven imagination of community characterised by closely knit groups of people living in support of each other's needs. Such an account bears a passing, though not exact, resemblance to Gypsy community. Distinguishing their lives from those of their non-Gypsy neighbours, respondents described both idealised versions of their own lives and relations with other Gypsy neighbours. These accounts stressed a picture of Gypsy communities, in which everybody knew everybody else's business and had access to banks of knowledge about family and social networks. Community in this sense created a functional daily world in which the individual and the family could feel secure. These idealised accounts were also balanced with such comments as, "you get good and bad, same as anywhere" (Mr Y.), and "I'm friendly. Not friends with people but friendly with them". So, individuals might be identified as not being a friend, or not being good neighbours; but within the context of community relations they were neighbours who were understood and whose behaviour could be anticipated, (for example they could be trusted not to be paedophiles or not to call the police out to deal with a dispute between Gypsy neighbours). This contrasted with their relationships with non-Gypsy neighbours who were understood to threaten the security of Gypsies. Typically non-Gypsies were understood to harbour racist/stereotypical views about Gypsies; their status as Non-Gypsies afforded them wider protections and benefits from the state than those enjoyed by Gypsies; and to live in a world that was not bound together by a sense of community. Cumulatively such traits suggest non-Gypsies pose a great threat to Gypsies, in particular because of their lack of community. Whilst the threat of non-Gypsy hostility and the apparently protected status of non-Gypsies make relations with Gypsies very problematic; the additional lack of community makes non-Gypsy society appear ever more volatile. Non-Gypsies lack of knowledge about their non-Gypsy neighbours, was portrayed as effectively generating situations in which dangerous or threatening members of society could flourish. The assumption was that someone who transgressed within a Gypsy community would be immediately discoverable and punished or ostracised from their community; but that a similar transgression in the *gaujo* world would go unnoticed.

Community constructed in this fashion was not only in opposition to the lack of community in the *gaujo* world, it was also understood differently to the nostalgic account suggested by Bauman (2001). Nostalgia in non-Gypsy discourses is often used to account for a misplaced yearning for the past, for example lost colonial pasts (Said, 2000) or in the more extreme sense of Baudrillard's (1994) simulacrum; the invention

of a memory for which there is no original. The conception of an invented memory has a particular resonance within the more romanticised accounts of Gypsies, which suggest that at an indeterminate time in the past they lived idealised alfresco lives (see Sibley, 1995; Mayall 1985 & 1988). Gypsy community however, with its strong attachments to geographical spaces was not understood by respondents in terms of the past but rather in terms of the present. Community was not a nebulous concept but something that represented very practical responses to on-going hardships. The sense of living in a physical present that was well understood rather than in a more nuanced world in which memory, geography and identity were being conceptualised was striking.

Anderson's (1991) description of imagined community in which the nation is 'conceived as a deep, horizontal comradeship', did not resonate with the descriptions offered by respondents. In Anderson's description of the nation, the sense of community refers very specifically to an understanding of the ties necessary to bind together groups of people who, 'will never know most of their fellow-members, meet them, or even hear of them, yet in the minds of each lives the image of their communion' (1991:6). Repeatedly Gypsies described the importance of knowing other Gypsies through physical contacts, (attending fairs or social events), and also through a network of shared knowledge. These descriptions credit Gypsy community as operating within a realm in which the 'real', (i.e. 'real' connections or real knowledge between and amongst groups of people), is literally true; community based on shared knowledge that has been tested and given credence by the community itself.

The difference between Gypsy community and imagined community designed to hold together nationhood was also revealed on occasions when Gypsy respondents were included within non-Gypsy social events. In one very striking conversation the difference between the literal real of being a part of a Gypsy community and the inability to connect within non-Gypsy communal behaviours was highlighted. Mrs A. talked about a night out with non-Gypsy friends during which the husband of one of her friends called her a racist name,

He called me the most awful name, and I was really shocked, I was like, we've been pals all night and that and his wife she was mortified.....a few weeks later he apologised, but it ruined things, I felt outcasted (Mrs A.)

She went on to explain how she no longer spent time with this group of friends because, 'I don't feel welcome anymore. I don't feel safe. Even though you're an adult it still happens'. The shared sense of community, that is to say the community that is imagined in Anderson's sense, is one that works to tie

together groups of people who consider it an acceptable practice to routinely call Gypsies racist names. The building blocks of the nation are founded upon communal understandings in which Gypsies are understood through stereotypes such as dirtiness or criminality. Mrs A. found herself in a situation in which her presence at a pub with non-Gypsy friends indicated to other non-Gypsies present an acceptance of the imagined community *they shared*. What was shared, or at least what was shared amongst some of Mrs A.'s non-Gypsy friends was a set of disrespectful though commonly applied stereotypes. Obviously this represented a misunderstanding on both sides and in consequence Mrs A. was very hurt.

Mr R. an antiques dealer who both worked and socialised largely with non-Gypsies, (and who kept details of his background largely hidden), described his extreme discomfort at a dinner party in which acquaintances made continual references to 'dirty pikeys'. In the end his wife, (who was not a Gypsy), made clear she was uncomfortable with the racist stereotyping, and in a bizarre and unsettling turn of events Mr R. found himself being cajoled by the other guests to join them in laughing at and mocking his wife's perceived political correctness,

It wasn't the end of the world or anything remotely like that. But that expectation that we're all here in the same club with a glass of Pimms in our hand and that tomorrow nothing will have changed...its shit really. (Mr R.)

The imagined ties of community in the non-Gypsy world were consistently encountered as negative and demeaning attitudes towards Gypsies, in contrast to understandings of community with and between Gypsies, which highlighted real knowledge that could be verified. Furthermore, this real knowledge was part of a process that ensured acceptable behaviour within the community. When Mr Y. explained that he knew all about his neighbours and all about their families, it was loaded with the expectation that such knowledge ensured community members lived together in ways that were acceptable to each other. If community members failed to live up to each other's expectations, then their behaviour would again become known to everyone else; failing to conform to this communal work would become real knowledge that was broadcast far and wide. Whereas Mrs A. could move within and around non-Gypsy communities on the widely held assumption that specific knowledge about her life was probably quite limited, (though assumptions about her imagined life would be widespread); the same was not true for her life within the Gypsy community, where her actions would be well known and judged specifically against acceptable codes of Gypsy behaviour.

8.4 Gypsies, Community and Time

Most respondents did not articulate nostalgic discourses when describing the changes that had occurred throughout their lives and those of their parents, but many commented upon the history of Gypsy communities. Again, this perhaps disrupts community understood as an imagined bonding; nostalgic accounts of the past could be used to summon up communal bonds that despite being imagined retain their potency, (e.g. a romantic depiction of life on the open road). Whereas Anderson, (referring back to Benjamin, 1999), concentrates a discussion of time around 'simultaneity' and 'meanwhile time', that stresses community members going about their lives and doing different things at the same time to summon up the nation state; amongst Gypsies there is less emphasis upon the historical foundations of communities imagined as nations. Only one respondent (Mr F.) made a comment that was overtly nostalgic about past ways of life; most however expressed an understanding of how Gypsy lifestyles had changed over the past 50 years, but without expressing much concern about the effects of such change. Instead, their interests seemed more driven by understanding and adapting to changing circumstances in ways that would ensure their family's future prosperity. For respondents 'meanwhile time' existed to some extent as the shared sense of community understood amongst Gypsies but not as a means of identifying a belonging to the nation-state. Mr Y. described trips abroad where he would discuss economic activity with other European Gypsies and Roma, and this was perhaps the closest approximation to a sense of time, in which there was an awareness of shared activities taking place simultaneously. In many respects this contradicted the more general comments of respondents, including Mr Y. himself, that Gypsies really did know the past and present details of other Gypsies. This sense of community seemed founded upon expectations that much greater knowledge of individual's personal lives and family background was known in a much more specific manner.

Mr F. was unusual because he did look back and wished his life had not changed as dramatically as it had done. His nostalgia in some respects closely mirrored Anderson's 'meanwhile time', suggesting a shared expectation of life chances, though rooted in memories rather than practical everyday activity,

I'd like to see some of the old ways come back as well, like the old paper flowers, the old primrose baskets, the old wooden flowers. (Mr F.)

Mr F. was living in extreme poverty at the time, with a large family and no prospect of any income other than state benefits. Some of his very overt nostalgia seemed to reflect his current economic difficulties and the seemingly insurmountable problems shaping his family's future. What was really striking about Mr F.'s

comments however, was how they did not accord with the majority of other respondents, who tended to identify new and on-going opportunities, as more important in their lives. Mr F. like other respondents identified living through difficult times as the norm and unusually appeared to find some solace in nostalgic memories. The majority of other respondents identified current opportunities as the means of overcoming difficulties in their lives, in some ways echoing Benjamin's observation,

The tradition of the oppressed teaches us that the "state of emergency" in which we live is not the exception but the rule. We must attain to a conception of history that is in keeping with this insight. (Benjamin, 1999:248)

Benjamin of course also suggests that the victors in any struggle write its history. Historic accounts of community written by non-Gypsies could possibly tend towards romanticisation in order to describe a concept that has a positive resonance, i.e. community, in terms that retain a positive aura for non-Gypsies, even though in this context it is being applied to a group of people regarded very negatively. In other words, the nostalgic accounts suggested by Mr F., become privileged and given credence by non-Gypsies over and above accounts that describe harsher realities of struggle. Respondents who identified closely with their struggle in the present day conform not to expectations of the nostalgic past, but rather to the negatively stereotyped present.

8.5 A Community within: the role of Gypsy communities within the state

Bowles and Gintis's (2002) description of the economic role that can be played by 'community governance' provides a useful means of understanding how community might work to regulate market and state. Bowles and Gintis suggest that where the state or economic markets fail it is often possible for communities themselves to operate successfully. Gypsy families may find many aspects of sedentarism oppressive and in particular find themselves not economically supported by the state and market functions of the sedentary world to the same degree as non-Gypsies. By community action it is possible to complement and alleviate the problems of state and market; this might take the form of shared knowledge and mutual trust for example.

Mr Y. described how ten years previously he used to run a garage; at the same time another family he knew was, 'very much down on his luck, in a lot of trouble. So we fixed up his van for him, got him started again'.

In the intervening years this relationship had continued to yield mutually beneficial results in a number of ways. For example, one of the sons of the family now worked for the Traveller Education Service and he had advised the former garage owner about Elective Home Education. The relationship had flourished around a shared sense of social capital that emphasised qualities such as trust and sharing. For the family who had been in difficulties ten years previously, the state did not offer the type of help needed at that time, whereas the less formal Gypsy community structures both understood and responded to their problems. Bowles and Gintis (2002) emphasise situations in which community governance complements the state and markets. In this sense, community is a response that is integrated within society. Some aspects of respondents' lives however suggested Gypsy communities could isolate aspects of their lives from non-Gypsy society altogether, (elective home education or nomadism for example). In such cases community acted as 'niche' or a 'space in between', which in part was successful, by its failing to register with non-Gypsy society. Such communal practice, by diverting from the wider imagined community of the nation, occurs simultaneously but not within the 'meanwhile' time of Benjamin (1999) and Anderson (1991); rather it can almost be seen as an 'instead of' time.

Community therefore materialised in different ways at different times: it was a means of delivering income through shared knowledge and mutually beneficial alliances between individuals and families; it was a means of resisting the impact of non-Gypsy society; and, it was a means of mitigating the intrusions made by the state within Gypsy life, (for example school attendance and planning procedures). The maintenance of environments, such as sites, in which residents and other Gypsy visitors openly articulated a strong sense of Gypsy identity, provided a necessary physical materialisation of Gypsy community. This physical materialisation was apparent elsewhere for example at horse fairs and social events organised by the Gypsy community, such as the *Romany Routes* days at the open-air Weald and Downland Museum. Face-to-face contacts and a physical presence allowed community members to accrue knowledge and validation for their lifestyles within the community.

This aspect of community was seen by Gypsy respondents to be a missing element within non-Gypsy lives. The sense that non-Gypsies did not know their neighbours was regularly evidenced by Gypsy respondents in terms of the moral weakness of non-Gypsies; this was reflected in references to non-Gypsies tolerating their children conducting sexual relationships at an early age, drink and drug abuse and the failure of non-Gypsies to tackle rampant paedophilia in their midst. Fears of such behaviours was amongst the most cited reasons

for withdrawing teenaged children from school and for preferring to live on sites rather than agree to being housed;

It is why I never wanted the house. The council move anyone next door. Could be a pervert and you would never know. Living next door. I know her [referring to occupant of nearby trailer]. Everything about her. (Mr C.)

In these terms, Gypsies viewed the protections offered to non-Gypsies that might be seen to derive from their rights as citizens, as protecting the dangerous and immoral workings of the non-Gypsy world. The protections offered to citizens, such as the work of the police and by institutions such as local councils or regional government, were associated as primarily acting on the behalf of non-Gypsies rather than Gypsies; protecting the interests of an immoral, unsafe society rather than protecting the interests of a moral and safe Gypsy community.

Gypsies regarded the protection of non-Gypsies by the state as hugely unfair. When making an assessment of whether Gypsy or non-Gypsy lifestyles were more successful, most respondents felt the economic security and political ascendancy of non-Gypsies clearly ensured the success of their social structures. Mr M.'s experience described earlier, of the beach café owner threatening to call the police and the assumption that the police would immediately take the side of the non-Gypsy café owner being one example. On the Docks Site, Mrs T. and Mrs K. both described their discomfort at the council's suggestion they would install CCTV cameras around the site and questioned whose security they were supposed to protect;

They wanted to put one out there, one down there and one at the top. Now would you let somebody put a CCTV camera outside your house?... They put cameras up at the [Site Warden's] bungalow, fair enough, we don't mind that. But when it comes to them actually on site watching what time we are getting up in the mornings going to wee and what time we are having a bath and God knows what. It's not right is it? (Mrs T.)

Later discussing the potential positioning of a CCTV camera on the 12-foot high fencing that enclosed the site, Mrs T. noted it was as though the council wanted Gypsies to live in 'concentration camps'. Her view was that although she and the other families on the site would choose to live there together, the council to some extent manipulated the situation so that Gypsies were almost imprisoned by the location itself. The threat of being watched by CCTV cameras belonging to the local council, and by association shared with local police authorities, was an intrusion from the sedentary world that was unacceptable. Ironically perhaps, the feeling that within the sites everyone knew everyone else's business was regarded as one of the key ways of maintaining the safety of community members. Surveillance from outside was akin to relinquishing

power to non-Gypsies, whilst surveillance within and amongst community members was an expression of the community's internal power.

8.6 Conclusions

There is a clear distinction between how 'community' is understood by Gypsies and non-Gypsies. The wider sense of community, that which is supported and promoted by the state and by its citizens, works on inclusive/exclusive principles. The wider group of citizens are included within this understanding of community, which may be understood in terms of Anderson's (1991) imagined community. Membership of this community entails tacit understanding and agreement to many wide-ranging principles that define the perceived identity of the community. These tacit understandings form the building blocks of the nation state. Included amongst these shared understandings are the very explicit stereotypes about Gypsy dirtiness, unreliability, dangerousness or criminality; these are used to perpetuate the exclusion of Gypsies from the imagined community. They represent a set of shared values in which the boundary between being a citizen and a non-citizen are demarcated.

The common understanding about who belongs and who does not belong, about who is a citizen and who is not a citizen operates through notions of 'meanwhile' time discussed by Anderson (1991). That is to say, these shared attitudes are able to materialise in different circumstances and at different times, because they are universally shared. At any time a citizen when entering into a discourse with another citizen, would immediately be able to embrace a shared sense of what Gypsies are like. So even though the nation is a vast body of people who do not personally know each other, they will all share similar bigoted views about Gypsies and be able to identify fellow citizens through these shared perspectives.

Despite strong notions of community existing for non-Gypsies it materialised in perhaps an even more robust fashion for Gypsies with far less emphasis on imagined knowledge or shared beliefs; instead these are replaced with physical connections. Community for Gypsies did not rely on Anderson's (1991) 'meanwhile time'. There was not the same need for individuals to consider they shared a common purpose because, while they were engaged in one activity, at the same (meanwhile) time another community member was engaged in something else, with both acting within a shared set of values. Rather Gypsy community worked within an 'instead' framework of time; so instead of being a part of the imagined community and its

everyday activity Gypsy community struggled against the daily oppressions of the state in order to survive. Community strength was a useful strategy for a marginal community that did not wish to engage in the social practices of the dominant majority. Community was however a separate space, which although it operated to foster the cultural norms of the minority Gypsy group, it could only mitigate against the more aggressive intrusions of the majority. In other words it acts in a similar way to Bowles and Gintis (2002) description of community governance by complementing market and state functions, but in addition to that it perpetuates Gypsy identity. Without a strong sense of community materialising in a very physical way, much of the value and understanding of what it means to be a Gypsy would be threatened.

Gypsy community appeared to work in opposition to non-Gypsies and their social structures such as the institutions of the state and markets organised within frameworks such as citizenship. At the same time, aspects of community ran parallel to the same social structures, very much in the Bowles and Gintis (2002) sense, as a means of regulating state and market. This regulation can perhaps be understood in a much wider sense of the regulation of identity production and the regulation of boundary lines between Gypsies and non-Gypsies. By doing so the difference of Gypsies to non-Gypsies is clearly recognised by both parties. More importantly the difference is regulated in ways that ensure Gypsies are not a particular burden upon non-Gypsies; the space occupied by Gypsies is just marginally productive in terms of generating income and providing living space. Such spaces are comparatively very circumscribed compared to non-Gypsy expectations, but that sense of marginal space seems very apposite because it includes the smallest of economic (profit) margins. The regulation of boundaries may be seen as useful for non-Gypsies. In the most mundane sense this would be the regulation of who is and who is not a Gypsy or a non-Gypsy. This is useful as a means of understanding who is a citizen and more importantly, who has rights and obligations within the state. Furthermore by regulating the boundary between Gypsies and non-Gypsies a tangible, physical and symbolic 'edge' to the citizen's identity is demarcated.

Notes

1. In part the conversation between myself and Mrs N. and her sister Mrs O. explored the territory of their aggression in response to the way they engaged with myself as an interviewer, (at one point I suggested to them that I could understand how someone could find them intimidating). The interview, which was scheduled with Mrs N. but included contributions from her sister, was conducted in a very candid fashion and both sisters were very responsive and seemed to enjoy giving voluble and detailed answers. I found them both very pleasant and good company; however, it was also apparent to me that they conducted the interview in what could be construed as a very aggressive manner. Throughout the interview they both

shouted on occasions (sometimes at me, sometimes at each other), they used their arms to stress their opinions and they maintained direct eye contact when talking to me. The start of the interview was marked by a series of challenges about the purpose of my research and my background conducted in what could again be construed as an aggressive fashion.

Chapter 9 Conclusions

9.1 Research Aims

The aim of this research is to examine the different ways in which Gypsy identity materialises for Gypsy families living on the south coast and to explore and reconcile the ambiguities and differences that occur within differing accounts of Gypsy identity. The research has concentrated on particular themes such as the spaces occupied by families, education and work, as these represent important daily concerns for respondents' lives and provide tangible data about how families' daily lives are conducted. In order to analyse and understand this data, the research considered respondents in terms of their own understandings of the types of community they lived amongst and their relationship to non-Gypsy neighbours, in particular in terms of citizenship. Thematically accounts emerged in which respondents highlighted both differences and similarities between their lives, other Gypsy families and non-Gypsy neighbours. The research considers how these differences and similarities are understood in terms of respondents' identity.

9.2 Boundaries and points of crossing

At the core of this research is the identification of a catalogue of barriers that exist between the lives of Gypsies and their neighbours on the south coast of England. Whilst it is necessary to flag up that these barriers are often flexible or in flux, and that their significance varies from individual to individual; what remains clear is that they do not form a vague backdrop, but rather are substantial reference points to Gypsy lives. Taken together they suggest a boundary drawn between Gypsies and non-Gypsies. Respondents described how they engaged differently, (to their non-Gypsy neighbours), in almost all aspects of their daily lives be it making accommodation arrangements, educating children or buying a loaf of bread at the local shops. Such different engagements in aspects of daily lives underlines, how despite the identifiable sense of difference experienced by Gypsies, they still managed those aspects of their lives in ways that ensured they continued to have access to a home or education or food. In other words the substantial boundary lines between Gypsies and non-Gypsies were continually crossed during daily life.

This section will consider the boundaries that exist and how they are managed by Gypsies based on the themes outlined in the research findings i.e. space and accommodation, work, education, citizenship and community.

9.2.1 Physical boundaries: sites and accommodation

One very tangible boundary between Gypsies and non-Gypsies exists in the location of local authority sites along the south coast in inaccessible places, often on the outskirts of towns and often in close proximity to less domestic features, (i.e. waste disposal tips, sewage works, and industrial land). This perpetuates to some extent the impression that Gypsy families are not living amongst the wider population. Instead they seem to fit a stereotype of an itinerant group of people who travel, *from* somewhere else, *into* the non-Gypsy world. In order to engage with non-Gypsies they have to travel, at the very least, from the edge of town into its residential and commercial centres. In some respects this maintains an illusion; Gypsies who were largely settled on local authority sites, still gave an impression of nomadism in towns where the general population may be unaware of their close proximity on the 'edge of town'. By doing so, something of the 'usefulness' of Gypsies as boundary markers for non-Gypsy identity may be understood; unlike other immigrant groups living amongst the native population, Gypsies remain steadfastly on the outside and are not gradually assimilated into the native identity. Their position on the 'edge of town' demarcates the edge of identity, and, like a physical or geographical border, provides a useful boundary between who are natives and who are not.

This account would obviously have to be tempered by a consideration of the many housed families who do live in much closer proximity to non-Gypsy neighbours. However, the distance between local authority sites and other residential areas, was often mirrored in the distance created by wealthier families purchasing their own land to live on. Invariably these families also sought to live in spaces that were at a considerable distance from non-Gypsy neighbours. It is difficult not to conclude that, in some respect the maintenance of physical distance between Gypsies and non-Gypsies, was something that was found to be mutually acceptable to both parties. For families who lived on their own land there was a clear understanding that their safety was vastly improved by not sharing spaces with non-Gypsy neighbours. The creation of a private distanced space was one means of ensuring the shared community values of Gypsies were in the ascendant; all the more so on sites where a small number of family members co-existed. The knowledge of who was,

and who was not on the site, was intensified by limiting access to all but very close relations. On local authority sites there was perhaps a slightly more ambiguous relationship between families and their accommodation. In particular many complaints were raised about the quality of sites and the cost of living on them. Despite this it was commonplace for respondents to note they did not wish to move off the site into housing association stock. Also, respondents like Mr F. who lived in a council house, noted his ideal would be to move his family onto their own land in a rural setting, but as a more attainable alternative, he would prefer to live on the local authority site, (a site whose shortcomings Mr F. was fully aware of).

The particular importance of the geographical location of sites is that they reinforce intangible boundaries by creating tangible, spatial distance. This distance relates to the perceptions of both Gypsies and non-Gypsies. By keeping non-Gypsies away from sites and away from the physical spaces of their daily lives, respondents reported a greater degree of safety that was not threatened by the presence of an unknown, potentially dangerous non-Gypsy neighbour. In addition where sites are located in obscure places they are only seen by relatively small numbers of non-Gypsies; the Hill Site for example was probably only known to a small number of local authority workers from the waste disposal site and sewage works and to the police. Many of the town residents, despite living in close proximity, are probably unaware of the precise location or the living conditions of their Gypsy neighbours. In some respects this calls into question whether or not these residents consider Gypsies to be neighbours, or whether they might regard them as complete outsiders who live apart from them.

Whilst it often appeared sites were intended to be invisible to the wider public, it was interesting to note the methods of surveillance designed to ensure Gypsies remained visible, if not to their neighbours then to the state. In particular the regular police patrols of sites and the proposals to install CCTV cameras on one site, suggest an interest at an official level to monitor the activities of Gypsy families. The same sort of monitoring also materialised in the behaviours of neighbours; when the E.'s proposals for seeking temporary planning permission became local knowledge for example, there was a heightened interest in their activities both from the local planning office, parish council and their neighbours. This interest was stimulated within a framework of official interventions such as the online publication of family details and Parish Council meetings convened to discuss neighbour's objections to planning applications. Apparent in these processes was the rights of citizens (non-Gypsies) being seen to be safeguarded by measures that impinge upon the lives of Gypsies (non-citizens). The desire to situate Gypsy families in discrete, near invisible locations,

whilst at the same time maintaining a degree of surveillance of their activities, brings to the fore the distinctions that can be understood between Gypsy and non-Gypsy community.

The consequences of being spatially isolated echo Sennett's (1994) account of the Venetian ghetto. Both in the non-Gypsy population's displacement of fears of impurity and criminality into a controlled and closely monitored space, but also, *because of* the spatial constraints of the site creating a resilient Gypsy identity and community. Group identity effectively being strengthened to a certain extent by the feeling of living in adversity and at odds with the non-Gypsy population and, ironically countering Wacquant's (2008) description of a 'dumping ground', in which the lack of control over individual lives extends to a lack of control of collective identity. The adaptability of families to the limitation of local authority spaces in particular suggesting something closer to the porosity of space Benjamin and Laci (1924) described in Naples. There was often evidence of interpenetration between different spheres of life; social and individual, public and private, work and leisure, and in consequence social life shaped the spaces occupied by families. By doing so spaces that might at first sight be assumed to be oppressive or difficult instead appeared to reflect the strength of Gypsy communities.

9.2.2 Work and Income: the inevitability of crossing boundaries

Simmel's (1971) stranger is ambiguously predicated on a sense of distance in conjunction with nearness, as in the immigrant who belongs far away but lives within a different community; alien values and knowledge having to coexist amidst a parochial neighbourhood. Work and employment, and the necessity of generating income, required almost all respondents to engage in activity that would bring them into close proximity with their non-Gypsy neighbours. Even families who were not working, relied on direct engagements with non-Gypsies in order to claim state benefits.

One consequence of finding themselves forced into activity, (income generation), which required a relationship with non-Gypsies, was that many respondents deliberately kept parts of their identity hidden. Primarily this was because they felt non-Gypsy stereotypes would hinder their ability to secure work. Builders for example felt they were unlikely to gain a job if they were known to be Gypsies. In this respect the work routines of many respondents mirrored their preferred accommodation arrangements, of discretely located sites that remained largely invisible and anonymous to neighbours or anyone passing through a

locality. Such invisibility impacts upon the way Gypsies are perceived by their neighbours; including the possibility they are unlikely to be regarded within the reference points of Simmel's stranger if it is not apparent they are different in any respects from their neighbours.

Such anonymity within working routines also highlights how one perspective of what constitutes Simmel's stranger can almost be reversed. Whereas in Simmel's account the stranger is an understanding of the outsider created by the wider population, it appeared some respondents adhered to behaviours that constituted themselves as strangers. Respondents who described working relationships in which they shielded their Gypsy identity, and/or only engaged in work in locations away from their domestic lives, were exhibiting a great deal of agency in order to maintain their own distance and closeness with their neighbours. In such circumstances their ambiguous relationship was only understood by Gypsies and not by non-Gypsies.

An understanding of the stranger materialised in more commonly understood forms where work and income generation required respondents either to present themselves specifically as Gypsies or was something that could not be hidden. So Mr Y. organising and managing public events and sales of Gypsy artefacts (to a non-Gypsy public), clearly acted out a persona of being a Gypsy and this was a persona that stressed his difference from his clientele. Ironically, Mr Y. was also one of the most vocal respondents in explaining how he hid his identity when engaged in building work; highlighting both his own personal ability to switch and move between personae, and perhaps a heightened ability to use the framework of the stranger in different ways at different times. Other respondents, such as those claiming benefit and living on sites widely known to be Gypsy sites, were unable to enjoy the same luxury of deciding how and if they could manage the identity they presented to the world. Such respondents were identified as outsiders simply by their home address.

It is also likely that when Gypsies shield their identity, at a later date it heightens or exaggerates the strangeness when non-Gypsies become aware that their neighbours are Gypsies, or encounter them in their daily lives. It can be argued (Myers, 2008) that the breakdown of an understood closeness exaggerates the impact of the stranger. When non-Gypsies have little knowledge of the lives of Gypsies, (perhaps wondering where do Gypsies come from), or when a stereotype does not correspond with observable phenomena, (perhaps encountering Gypsies who do not apparently travel), this exacerbates the sense of difference.

Moving from an invisible to a visible role, highlights not just that there is a difference, but also that the difference is less well understood by their neighbours.

9.2.3 Education: Exercising choice

In contrast to the unavoidable work/income relationships with non-Gypsies, when deciding how best to educate their young people Gypsy families entered into more fluid arrangements. Despite an overwhelming acknowledgement that the benefits of a school education and resultant paper qualifications were desirable, and often essential in securing their children's future, this did not translate into guaranteed school attendance. Many Gypsy students dropped out of school either immediately upon reaching secondary school or shortly after. The reasons for this were generally related to fears of cultural erosion and concerns for the safety of children around adolescence. It was clear that simply not attending school did not directly equate to not being educated; some families employed private tutors and in many others, work skills were passed from one family member to another, (particularly fathers to sons). However, bearing in mind the consistency with which respondents stressed their fear that children were not acquiring all the necessary skills necessary to support their families in the future, the continuing adherence to very traditional patterns, (i.e. leaving school upon reaching adolescence), was perhaps surprising.

The unwillingness to insist on children continuing with education and the active removal of pupils from schools, suggests an over-riding desire on the part of some respondents to maintain the boundary between themselves and non-Gypsies and to value the differences between Gypsies and their neighbours. By removing students from school, families often contravened or skirted very closely their legal requirements, they contradicted widely accepted behaviours, and, in their own judgement risked failing to equip their children with adequate skills for the future. They therefore demonstrated a strong rather than a weak sense of agency. Education remains a key element of understanding how citizenship is constructed and this was something many respondents clearly grasped and reacted against. Often respondents described an almost selfish version of the role schooling would have on their children's lives; typically it was constituted in terms of schooling being good for 'them' (their children), but bad for 'us', (the wider family and Gypsy community). In this respect it appeared that the process of education (through schooling) not only taught students the necessary skills and knowledge related to supporting them in the future but also inducted them into non-Gypsy culture. Whereas in a discussion about work, a respondent might outline how they could

move into the Gypsy world to earn a living but then return to their own home and community at the end of the day; schools were perceived to do something very different. The value of education was loaded with the risk of crossing too closely into the *gaujo* world and not being able to return; a perspective that would be acknowledged to be both true and a desirable function of schooling within the mechanics of citizenship.

9.2.4 Citizenship vs. Community: the impenetrability of citizenship and the pooled resources of community

Whilst very tangible boundaries, such as accessing healthcare or shopping in a supermarket, were regularly being crossed; it often felt that equally tangible boundaries remained in place; so for example when a certain point in a child's education was reached, they would suddenly no longer attend school. Such boundaries appeared to stake out markers of no return or a line that defined membership within the Gypsy community, as opposed to membership of a different *gaujo* community; one that is within the ties that bind non-Gypsy communities together.

These boundaries delineated difference between being a Gypsy and being a non-Gypsy, and demonstrated Gypsies were not British citizens in a recognisably comparable way, to that of their non-Gypsy neighbours. Whilst citizenship might generally be anticipated to encompass all communities and groups within a political or state boundary, Gypsy families on the south coast identified and worked to maintain their distinction from membership of the citizenry. Whilst they might access an institution or service associated with the state, and with the benefits of being a citizen; they did so in a different way. At times families described surreptitiously accessing services, (e.g. hiding their Gypsy identity when sending children to school), or alternatively fighting against an institution, (e.g. fighting for planning permission in the face of opposition from neighbours and local officials). At a more extreme level they described the active work of an institution like the police in harassing or disrupting their lives. On the rights side of the 'being a citizen' equation, respondents described a requirement to cross a boundary that appeared to be designed to restrict their access. Gypsies and non-Gypsies seemingly shared a perception of citizenship values demarcating each other; with Gypsies reluctant to be consumed by British citizenship and British citizens actively working to restrict Gypsies access to it.

Equally striking was the failure of small community actions to repair injustices encountered by Gypsy families. Alexander (2006) discusses the processes by which 'acts of civil repair', can counteract the fear

that being a citizen entails being overwhelmed by the homogenous strength of essentially democratised power, concentrated in the hands of the majority of the population and enshrined within the workings of the state. The evidence for families on the south coast was that such acts of civil repair featured as the response of other citizens to militate against the rights of Gypsies; most typically in the ability of local communities to successfully oppose planning permission being granted to Gypsy families. Ironically it often appears that national policy recognises and attempts to make provision for the shortage of Gypsy accommodation in its planning decisions; however, at a local level, 'active citizens' are able to defend their entrenched positions of refusing to allow Gypsy sites in their neighbourhoods. So called 'active citizens', that is people engaged in local politics and local community action, remain one of the first lines of defence when it comes to opposing closer engagement with Gypsy lives or the sharing of local amenities with their communities. Acts of civil repair by 'active citizens' essentially promoted the values and interests of the majority population, in the face of the identifiable needs of a struggling minority group, (e.g. provision of adequate accommodation).

Whilst citizenship implied a shared (by non-Gypsies) set of common values that Gypsy families did not subscribe to, understandings of Gypsy community materialised differently and seemingly allowed for a greater unpredictability amongst their community membership. Whilst certain shared behaviours were quickly acknowledged as being a vital part of community, this was in a context in which different Gypsies were believed to be different and individual. There was an overt acknowledgement for example that not every member of the Gypsy community was necessarily morally upstanding and a 'good neighbour' to other Gypsies. What was stressed to a much greater degree was the means by which shared communal knowledge was pooled effectively within the Gypsy community. Non-Gypsy neighbours were seen to believe in a shared commonality that was unmanaged, unrealistic and in large part ephemeral; less an imagined community and more a community of the imagination. Gypsy community instead relied on a robust sense of literally knowing everything about everyone particularly their weaknesses and bad points.

9.2.5 Non-Citizenship

In most respects respondents appeared to be non-citizens. On the one hand, they were actively discouraged by other citizens from sharing in the commonly held values, rights, responsibilities and the benefits of a community membership based on citizenship. On the other hand, families stressed different sets of values

and understandings of what constituted community, which in many ways proscribed them from being citizens.

This mirrored much of the historic experiences of Gypsies in the UK. Whilst the distinctions drawn between Gypsies and non-Gypsies has been a constant factor of Gypsy lives in Britain; of more interest is the specific political processes that have maintained those distinctions in different eras. As discussed in the literature review, since they first arrived in Tudor England, Gypsies faced threats of execution and later deportation as slaves; that is to say, very extreme acts of exclusion and ones that perhaps predate notions of citizenship. Throughout the twentieth century however, it has been more measured political processes, designed to maintain citizenship as a means of social organisation, that have excluded Gypsies from being counted as citizens. The twentieth century saw quite radical legislation, designed to be inclusive and to extend political and social rights to greater numbers of the population. However, the benefits that accrued from such legislation often sidestepped Gypsies altogether, or worse still, actively impinged upon their lives.

Perhaps more worrying is the sense in which a wide range of liberal thought has promoted a political agenda in which citizenship, particularly active participatory citizenship, is understood as virtuous and beneficial; so much so that it even figures on the school curriculum. This is problematic for many Gypsies because, although citizenship is an inclusive regime for citizens; it is a highly exclusive regime in the lives of non-Gypsies. By becoming identified as non-citizens, Gypsies are identified as not participating within the duties of citizens and therefore not deserving the rights and benefits that accrue to citizens. Beyond the diminished access to the benefits of citizenship, (e.g. adequate healthcare), there is a sense in which the perception of Gypsies by non-Gypsies is framed by their being non-citizens.

The respondents in this research often framed their lives within accounts of their difficulties in engaging with state institutions and of their lives being viewed in a derogatory fashion by their neighbours. In many respects this reflects the positioning of Gypsies as different and distanced from citizens: they are effectively non-citizens living in Britain.

9.3 Community, Gypsy families and identity

Having considered how boundaries are formed between Gypsies and non-Gypsies this section examines the impact these have for Gypsy identity; in particular how individual identities are situated within the communities built by Gypsies.

9.3.1 *A literal rather than an imagined community*

As discussed respondents' understandings of community differ to Anderson's (1991) description of an imagined community working within 'meanwhile time'; Gypsy families did not construct a narrative in their lives which privileged a sense of simultaneity with their neighbours on the south coast or more widely in the UK. Anderson's 'meanwhile' time presumes a commonality of experience and values amongst individuals who remain unknown to each other, but still bond as a coherent group or community. In this respect it more closely resembles the sort of bonding envisaged within citizenship debates, (e.g. Marshall's (1950) vision of citizenship as a means of protecting a wide spectrum of different interests), which, as experienced by Gypsy families tends to be a process that excludes them from membership.

The Gypsy families in this research operated almost within a bubble, what could be construed as a '*niche of time*' in which their actions were understood and articulated differently to those of their neighbours, even when closely mirroring the actions of their neighbours. In the example of accessing schools, there was, obviously, the knowledge that non-Gypsy families accessed education through state schooling for their children, and this was mirrored by many Gypsy families who also wished to access a similar education, (generally and unsurprisingly for the same reasons identified by non-Gypsies of the perceived gains their children would benefit from by acquiring skills taught in schools). An on-going distinction however was the narrative in which Gypsy parents explained how different it was for their families to access education, including the problems of dealing with the school and other parents; the sense in which the education on offer did not always sit comfortably with Gypsy values and the difficulties of combining Gypsy and non-Gypsy schedules across the school year. Where a degree of simultaneity was acknowledged it was of Gypsy and non-Gypsy time working in parallel rather than as a single shared continuum.

The 'niche' of time relating to Gypsy community was different to the idea of 'meanwhile' time where there is a need to identify commonality amongst communities who are unknown to each other. Instead the repeated refrain of respondents was that they had a literal knowledge of many people throughout their community. What is more, if they were unsure about a community member they would easily be able to track down someone else who had the literal knowledge about them. One consequence of these different understandings of the types of community that operated, on the one hand a literal community of Gypsies and on the other a fractured community of non-Gypsies who did not know each other, is an understanding of movement. For respondents there was the need to work amongst their own community and within the non-Gypsy community; in other words to cross and re-cross particular boundaries between their neighbours. By doing so the distinction between who was a Gypsy and who was not a Gypsy was continually reinforced; not least because of the identifiable sense of difference that was encountered when moving between Gypsy and non-Gypsy worlds. Again this could be viewed as reinforcing a materialisation of the *stranger*, though again it would ironically be an understanding by Gypsies of their role, rather than by non-Gypsies.

9.3.2 Identity and Community

Respondents described themselves as Gypsies or Travellers and in doing so appeared to signal identities that acknowledged their membership of a wider group of people, but they also regularly discussed their own individuality and difference from other community members. Furthermore they noted an understanding of Gypsy community that acknowledged individuality, rather than assuming commonality, between members as an overriding prerequisite of group membership.

Anderson's (1991) 'meanwhile' time highlights a significant difference between imagined community and the perception of Gypsy families' sense of community on the south coast. As already discussed respondents identified a much more literal version of knowing other Gypsies; so rather than just defining their relationship to other Gypsies in terms of the less specific assumption that they shared a degree of characteristics with a wide body of unknown other people, respondents tended to explain far more specific and knowledge based relationships to others within their community. This view further materialised within the regularly repeated refrain that not all other Gypsies were 'good'; it was far more likely for respondents to suggest that their neighbours represented a wide range of characteristics, some of which were positive, but some of which were negative. Such narrative accounts echoes Ricoeur's description of narrative time as the

'time-of-being-with-others' (1980:188); identity was shaped by the building of community networks or conversely by maintaining distance with non-Gypsies. The importance of physical or real human contact in these processes highlights the strong sense of agency exhibited by many respondents. The 'time-of-being-with-others', in some respects could operate in place of Hall's original sense of 'being'; replacing an originary nation with a sense of community. A 'time-of-being-with-others' also reflects a more fluid notion of identity than Hall's 'being'; one perhaps more suited to the Gypsy diaspora, and the unpredictable dispersal of Gypsy people more generally.

The community boundaries respondents identified had less to do with shared values but were bound up with an understanding that certain behaviours would be rigorously observed, e.g. the police would not be given assistance or small children would be accorded specific degrees of safety on a site. If anything, respondents identified the knowledge of past misdeeds as an additional protection in understanding who people were; so it would be better to know your neighbour was a thief or did not share certain values, if you could rely on him not to carry out specific actions that threatened the community.

This view of the world distinguished Gypsies from the lifestyles of their neighbours. Many respondents noted the danger they observed within the non-Gypsy world, as its failure to have a coherent sense of who their neighbours were, and what threats individual neighbours might pose to the security and safety of the wider community. This ties in with what could be perceived as the failure of Anderson's (1991) notion of community from a Gypsy perspective; 'meanwhile time' assumes a similarity amongst community members that is not robust enough to manage daily lives safely without the intervention of the state, to quite literally police the behaviours of community members.

The assumption that community members will act in predictable ways is based on an expectation that community members are all alike. Respondents' views of their community (Gypsy) neighbours were that they were quite possibly unlike each other, but that at the same time they were well known enough to make a judgement about the danger they might pose to a family's safety. Non-Gypsy neighbours however were portrayed as operating in a world in which dangers were rampant, (e.g. from predatory paedophiles), because non-Gypsies did not have the knowledge of who they were living amongst. Gypsies tended to compare their management of their communities as being driven by a greater exercise of individual and communal agency than that apparent in non-Gypsy neighbours.

Using respondents' analysis of the fractured nature of non-Gypsy, society it appears the level of control required to ensure safety for non-Gypsies, derives from the state and the institutions that are authorised on behalf of citizens. Without a literal knowledge of a different neighbour's business, the non-Gypsy notion of a community can only exist if the rights and responsibility agendas of being a citizen are managed institutionally and at arm's length. In some respects this accords with the benefits of security offered by being a citizen, though it highlights a Gypsy view of citizens generally being passive rather than active citizens. Ironically, when 'active citizens' were encountered by families they tended to be those citizens most intent on blocking planning permission or otherwise interfering with Gypsy lifestyles. This view of community bore little resemblance to the communities formed by Gypsy families on the south coast, which in addition to a literal interpretation of knowing their neighbours, relied on a much more direct management of their safety and community relations.

Gypsy identity materialised amongst respondents within boundaries that acknowledged their membership of a group understood by themselves and by outsiders as Gypsies. Of equal importance was making a clear distinction that they did not belong within the wider community of non-Gypsies. Despite often being very derogatory about other types of Gypsies, (e.g. an English Gypsy might make a blanket statement about their dislike of Irish Travellers), there was still a sense in which discussions about who Gypsies were would envelop all groups of Gypsies. In this sense the understanding of who was a 'Gypsy', mirrored the use of such terms by non-Gypsies, who were not *au fait* with different groups and histories. In this sense the ambivalence identified by Bauman (1991) when distinguishing strangers as a group outside of both poles of a friend:enemy dichotomy was highlighted. Such ambivalence creates another layer of doubt; unlike relationships in which a clear line of distinction is understood, the stranger muddies the meta-narrative of British identity, by including Gypsy communities whose continuing relationship to their neighbours is unclear and not easily translated into an understandable narrative.

9.3.3 The Literal Community

One of the most striking findings of this research was the multiple ways in which respondents identified themselves living within a 'literal' rather than 'imagined' community. Respondents talked about how they knew other Gypsies, not in a general sense, but in terms of very specific understandings of who individuals were; that is their family history, their connections to other families, what had gone wrong in their lives and

what their failings were. Respondents living on sites described the openness with which their daily lives were conducted. Such openness was plainly observable when conducting interviews; there might be interruptions from neighbours or a careful attention to making the interview as visible as possible.

Furthermore, understandings of non-Gypsy communities bore an uncanny resemblance to the kind of 'imagined' communities described by Anderson. Non-Gypsies were perceived to not enjoy the safety and security engendered by having literal knowledge of their neighbours. Non-Gypsies were identified as not sharing the same values as Gypsies, in large part because the type of community associated with non-Gypsies was understood to promote undesirable behaviours (e.g. paedophilia). For many respondents their identities were protected and maintained only by creating literal communities; that is by fostering certainty and security through an absolute level of knowledge about the people they were living amongst. When engaging with communities in which that level of knowledge was not apparent, (e.g. when sending children to school), respondents felt they were exposing their families to unnecessary risks and uncertainty.

9.4 Using a narrative account of identity to reconcile competing and ambiguous understandings of Gypsy identity

As discussed, the accounts given of Gypsy identity are endlessly convoluted and at odds with each other. The unresolved debate within academic studies between socially constructed and primordial accounts, sits comfortably within the widespread myths and fallacies that have informed popular accounts of who Gypsies are; in addition to all of which of course are the accounts Gypsies give of their own lives. This research situates the narratives of Gypsy families living on the south coast of England within many wider narratives, including their own accounts of Gypsy identity, populist and media accounts and the theoretical narratives of academics. Amongst the advantages of using a narrative approach to understand Gypsy identity is the opportunity to embrace the many shades of ambiguity that inform all of these different accounts of Gypsy identity.

9.4.1 Narratives and ambiguity

Sometimes ambiguity is necessary because it allows for patent untruths to be included within accounts of identity. One such untruth is the populist stereotype of Gypsies as disruptive, lazy, dirty people who steal rather than work. However patently untrue such a generic account maybe, it is an account that has enormous common currency and therefore needs to be included within the wider understandings of what constitutes Gypsy identity. In particular it is a stereotype that Gypsy families, including respondents in this research, understood to be widely held as true, by their non-Gypsy neighbours.

At some level the repetition of stereotypes such as these over very long periods of time impacts upon how identity is constructed. Not in the sense that Gypsies themselves believe these stereotypes; rather that historically, they understand they are the people who are described in these terms. In their daily lives, when coming into contact with their neighbours, they anticipate such neighbours hold a very low opinion of them. Whilst it seems undoubtedly true for Gypsies, that as Weeks (2000) suggests, communities are often made stronger when faced by outside hostility, it also undermines lives and introduces a certain vulnerability. The poor accommodation offered on local authority sites, harassment by police officers or racist press stories all suggest Gypsy lives can be disrupted and pushed to one side. It was telling that most respondents when describing such behaviours acknowledged them to be unfair, but still tended to consider them natural and simply part of life's burdens. There is an expectation that Gypsies are somehow not entitled to the same standards as non-Gypsies and this informs an element of how Gypsy identity and community is understood.

Another, very different and rather small example of ambiguity came from a respondent who claimed that Dudley Sutton, the actor who played Tinker Dill in the BBC drama series *Lovejoy* was a Gypsy and known to the respondent. This information was elicited during a conversation about Gypsy characters and Romany language commonly appearing on television programmes. There is little evidence that Sutton, who first came to prominence playing the part of a gay, leather clad biker in the 1964 film *The Leather Boys* is a Gypsy. However, his fictional character in *Lovejoy* occasionally referenced a background as a fairground barker and the *Lovejoy* series on occasion used a sprinkling of Anglo-Romanes expressions.

Taking these two examples, one a significant factor in the wider discourses about Gypsy lives and the other a small part of an individual's story, highlights how many different accounts of identity, including those that are incomplete, misjudged or untrue, compete and need to be brought together. For Ricoeur (1980) narrative

time provides a means of doing this effectively; an individual encounters many events in his or her life, which are inevitably only resolved at their conclusion. Perhaps more precisely the conclusions should be seen as being an endless succession of small conclusions, or stations, in which an individual constantly re-values many ambiguities. For the respondent, the heritage of Dudley Sutton was important, if perhaps only in a very small way, it provided a linkage between his daily life and a television show that gave him a great deal of pleasure. The same respondent also explained how historically Gypsies were descended from Native American Indians. In his narrative account of his identity he recognised both his membership of a wider and recognisable Gypsy community and his personal identity. Whilst it might seem obvious that some of his beliefs were inaccurate, they were the beliefs he had amalgamated into his life story. What is more they held together; whilst being interviewed his explanation of who he was, how he came to be here and how he related to the people around him was coherent and entirely convincing. His account also encapsulated the unpleasant ways he and his family had been treated by non-Gypsies throughout his life.

Within academic discourse a heightened intellectual argument is presented in which on the one hand a more recent socially constructed identity squares up to the evidence of a historic Indian migration. These are arguments which in some accounts have been shown to sit closer together or to feasibly run as concurrent examples of Gypsy identity (Matras 2002, 2004), though with many academics still keen to rally around very singular theoretical standpoints. There is a longstanding suspicion that, as Fraser (1992) suggested within these discourses there is a desire to fill in the gaps with newer myths; sometimes these are a means of promoting a purely academic line of thought and on other occasions they might be used to mobilise a political campaign. More pertinent however, is the means by which these ambiguous discourses materialise within the lives of families living on the south coast. To which the short answer is, they materialise in an ambiguous fashion because they *are* ambiguous.

Many respondents reflected upon the Indian diaspora, (with the exception of the respondent described above all accurately referred to the Indian sub-continent), and whilst it might not have figured greatly in their account of their identity, it was a fixed reference point. Many respondents were themselves, or had close family or friends, in marriages or partnerships with non-Gypsies; and, when they noted these relationships it was rarely recounted as a difficult or awkward situation. That the in principle closely guarded boundaries, as they were regularly described, of Gypsy community were permeable to non-Gypsies was not an issue that raised many eyebrows. Finally almost all respondents described their lives in terms of adaptation, in particular economic adaptation; they described the importance of changing their working practices and

lifestyles in order to survive financially and also to get the most out of life. These different accounts, which in many respects cross the gamut of the academic argument over foundations of Gypsy identity were all easily amalgamated within the narrative accounts of individual's lives.

That a narrative account of an individual identity retold by that individual holds together is perhaps unsurprising. Slightly more interesting is that the narrative accounts of a community of individuals, Gypsy families on the south coast, should also hold together despite the overwhelming requirement to embrace the ambiguities of individuals, of competing accounts of group identities and the misconceptions and stereotypes of non-Gypsy neighbours. What emerges from all the accounts is a coherent sense of individual identities and how they sit within the community identity of Gypsies. This happens despite respondents making specific differentiations about their overt dislike of certain types of other Gypsies, (i.e. between English Gypsies and Irish Travellers). This is not the same imagined community suggested by Anderson (1991); rather it is a community that emerges in the face of such a community.

Anderson (1991) envisages the formation of a state or nation which is held together by a communal identity at a point when it grows beyond medieval feudalism and individuals develop an understanding of connection to other individuals on the much larger scale of the nation. This connection to unknown numbers of peoples reflects the view expressed by many respondents, that their non-Gypsy neighbours lived fractured lives unconnected to the people around them.

9.4.2 Narrative as a means of understanding Gypsy identity

It is worth noting that underpinning Simmel's (1971) description of the Stranger is an important reference to movement; in the first instance of being an immigrant who has left one country to live amongst the nationals of another country. Difference materialises for the stranger because he or she lives amongst people who share different mores and cultural understandings. This is a difference understood and recognised not just by the stranger but also by the natives. In principle, Simmel's stranger offers little to understand the daily lives of Gypsies on the south coast; despite often citing an understanding of a diasporic movement in the wider context of who Gypsies were, this was rarely articulated as a direct explanation of their own experiences. When describing the movements experienced in their lives most of the English Gypsies interviewed described their transition between several counties on the south coast over the course of two or three

generations. The Irish Travellers who were interviewed described a more convincing account of diaspora in terms of moving from Ireland to England; but rarely contextualised this as a dramatic change in circumstances, (their sense of difference in Ireland was similar and comparable to that in England).

Movement understood less in terms of physical travel, but rather as the movement across cultural barriers between Gypsies and their neighbours, does have a greater rationale in explaining the particular resonance Simmel's (1971) stranger has for the lives of Gypsies. Furthermore, in the exclusionary practices that made accessing state services so difficult for many families, what emerges is a picture of Gypsies as non-citizens. Non-citizens in the sense that they are a group of people who do not belong amongst those people who are citizens and, in consequence, are not entitled to access services from the state. In this respect when accessing basic services, e.g. healthcare, Gypsy families cross a particular boundary leaving behind their own community, which does not have a National Health Service, and entering the world of British Citizens who provide for themselves the benefits of the NHS. (Gypsies in this example are portrayed in a similar fashion to so-called 'health tourists' (see The Guardian 3 July 2013) who visit the UK in order to access healthcare that is not provided freely in their own country). In accessing healthcare, or any other service or benefit provided by the state, Gypsy families cross and re-cross an invisible but very real boundary to be amongst their non-Gypsy neighbours.

In this less tangible sense of movement respondents appeared to encounter a crisis in their engagement with the non-Gypsy world. Many of the parents for example, expressed specific concerns about their children attending schools and cited concrete examples of bullying or of cultural erosion that demonstrated the difficulties associated with engaging directly with non-Gypsy neighbours. Despite this, some parents continued to persist with a school education for their children; whilst others withdrew their children from school. Whichever path was chosen, respondents acknowledged that their family was crossing a boundary between Gypsy and non-Gypsy culture. It was unlikely that either choice was perfect; children who attended school had their safety put at risk and potentially threatened the wider Gypsy community. Whilst children who left school early were likely to not acquire skills they would need to be successful in the future. Families were faced with a situation in which they managed links within both the Gypsy and non-Gypsy world that mirrored the sense of closeness and distance identified in Simmel's (1971) stranger.

9.5 Situating the Research

There is a long history of research that has examined Gypsy lives, (particularly as Margaret Greenfields (2008) has noted in the UK), this research obviously sits amongst and against such work. Romany or Gypsy Studies has often been an intellectually divisive field and in some respects this reflects the personal investment scholars have placed on the importance and value of Gypsy lives. This research looks to situate itself at a tangent from work that has explicitly defines Gypsy identity solely in terms of ethnicity, or solely in terms of social constructivism. In doing so it reconciles the accounts of individual respondents living in close proximity along the south coast of England, with wider debates about Gypsy identities and the spaces they occupy.

The Gypsies interviewed in this research regularly noted their engagement in the world beyond their own communities; likewise this research is situated in a wider world than just that of Romany Studies. The lives and experiences of Gypsies do raise serious questions about the lives of non-Gypsies. This research challenges not just whether citizenship should be regarded as virtuous but more fundamentally what are the boundary lines to citizenship. For non-Gypsies there is almost a utility about the non-citizenship of Gypsies; it marks a fixed point that determines and frames the extent of citizens' identities. The clear boundary lines that exclude Gypsies are useful to non-Gypsies because they define who they, (non-Gypsies), are. Gypsies are potentially the clearest answer to Isin's (2002:3) question, 'for citizens to establish themselves as virtuous, there ought to have been those who "lacked" their virtues. Against whom did citizens define themselves?'

In other respects the utility that might be understood from Gypsy lives does not transfer so readily into non-Gypsy lives. Gypsy economic adaptability, for example, when faced with changing economic conditions or times of austerity, seems largely overlooked either generally, or specifically within academia. In addition, the Gypsy notion of community is an attractive alternative to populist twenty-first century accounts of fractured, anonymous lives; and yet, again this rarely materialises within accounts of Gypsies. The accounts of identity that often emerged throughout this research provide interesting counterpoints to many sociological accounts; including challenging the primacy that is often placed upon 'belonging' and to being defined by ones association to a specific place of birth or motherland. Gypsy non-territoriality, as clearly evidenced by respondents, places greater emphasis on the routes of becoming and upon the use of agency. Not all, but many respondents, particularly those who were living more successful lives, described their identities in terms of the choices they made. They provide a strong testament against the notion of identity

that is socially constructed and for the belief in individuals to group together and be responsible for their own actions; both individually and collectively.

There are clear points of difference in the lives of Gypsies and these provide useful challenges to many accounts of identity, citizenship and community.

9.6 Final Thoughts

This research has examined the lives of Gypsy families on the south coast of England and their relationships with their neighbours. It focussed on specific aspects of daily lives, space and accommodation, work and education, where these relationships were tested out. It has also contextualised these findings within the narratives of community and citizenship. Examining the spaces in which Gypsies lived, it was clear that both Gypsies and non-Gypsies were responsible for situating Gypsy lives at a distance from mainstream domestic living spaces. When looking for work or to generate an income, Gypsy families inevitably had to move from their own distanced spaces into the world of their neighbours; they had to build relationships with non-Gypsies in order to generate income. In other aspects of their lives, such as schooling, families had more choice about what sort of relationships they wanted to create. Together, these often fluid arrangements, suggested a degree of ambiguity within Gypsy lives; an ambiguity that was resolved within the community's own narrative accounts of who Gypsies were but which remained a troubling and uncomfortable position when dealing with neighbours. The world of neighbours was seen as being fraught with danger and reliant on state controls to manage individual's behaviour. By distancing themselves from their neighbour's understandings of community Gypsies sought to protect their own unique identities. One consequence of maintaining distance was to ensure a continuing ambiguity in their relationships that often materialised as a distance between their neighbour's citizenship and their own role as non-citizens.

This research has tackled under-explored areas of Gypsy lives such as how community and citizenship can work independently. Some findings seem surprising, including on reflection, the more nuanced account Simmel's ever useful *stranger*. In other respects the research has highlighted areas that remain underexplored and deserving of further investigation. The adaptive nature of Gypsies mean there will always be changes in their lives, but I would particularly highlight the potential for future adaptations in the

intersection between Gypsy community and gender. Citizenship, particularly 'active citizenship' is also revealed to be problematic; assumptions of its virtuosity deserve to be challenged within future research.

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Television Programmes

Celebrity Big Brother, Channel 5, broadcast 18 August – 8 September 2011

My Big Fat Gypsy Wedding, Cutting Edge, Channel 4 first broadcast 18 January 2011

Appendix 1

Table of families by Primary and Secondary Sources of Income

Family	Primary Source of Family Income	Secondary Income	Notes
A	Benefit		No family members working
B	Scrap Metal	1. Benefit payments	
C	Unknown		
D	Car dealer	1. Other	'cars mostly' – suggestion that other opportunities taken as and when they arose.
E	Builder	1. Decorator 2. Horses	
F	Benefit		No family members working
G	Roads/tarmacing	1. Building Work 2. Driveways	Included as building work in previous table
H	Benefit		Roadside.
I	Building work		Motorways
J	Motorway labour		Included in building work on previous table
K	Benefit		No family members working
L	Sales of fork lift trucks	1. Import/export 2. Other	Family owned a large warehouse facility which housed both the fork lift truck business and was used to store container loads from Europe for distribution in UK and vice versa (e.g. Importing cheap beer and

			wine for resale.
M	Tree Surgeon	1. Works for and with Mr L. 2. Building work	An ambiguous working relationship existed between Mr L. and Mr. M. in which it was never suggested that one was the employer of the other rather they worked on a mutual basis. However it appeared Mr. L. generated work for which he needed a regular cohort of workers that included Mr.M.
N	Benefit		Not working.
O	Benefit		
P	Fencing		
Q	Benefit		
R	Antique shop owner		
S	Scrap metal dealer	1. Cars 2. Other	Other described as 'traditional Gypsy work'
T	Community Development Officer	1. Benefit payments	
U	Benefit	1. Builder/labourer	No family members employed
V	Benefit	1. Building work	
W	Horses	Seasonal sales of christmas trees. Shop assistant Other – depending on opportunities	Shop assistant work was the 15 year old daughter's Saturday job at John Lewis
X	Benefit		No family members employed
Y	Building Contractor	1. Builder 2. Antique dealing 3. Import/export 4. Seasonal work 5. Gypsy fairs/horse fairs	Mr. Y. and his family have many business interests.

		6. School Consultancy 7. Other	
Z	Patios and driveways	1. Building work	Included in building work in previous table
AA	Unknown		Mr AA was working
BB	Retired		Mr BB formerly travelled seasonally for work (described as 'traditional' Gypsy work. He had a lot of experience working with horses including racing stables.
CC	Double Glazing	1. Building work	Travel seasonally for work
DD	Fairground Travellers		Travel seasonally March to November
EE	Benefit		No family members working
FF	Landscape Gardening/Tree Surgery	1. Supermarket job	Mr FF – gardener. Mrs FF worked in local supermarket